

KENAN EVREN'S AND TURGUT ÖZAL'S CONCEPTUALIZATIONS  
OF SECULARISM: A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

A Master's Thesis

Presented by

Burhanettin DURAN

to

The Institute of Economics and Social Sciences

of Bilkent University

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in

POLITICAL SCIENCE AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

BILKENT UNIVERSITY

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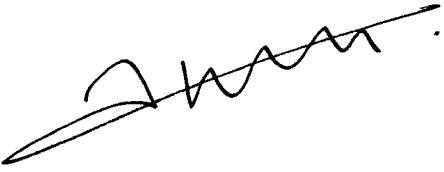
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Ass. Prof. Orhan Tekelioğlu



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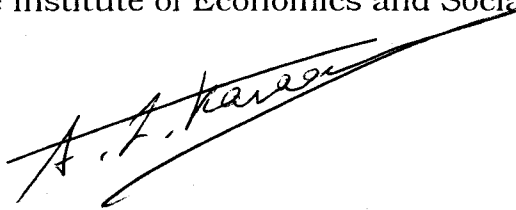


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## ABSTRACT

Present study aims to analyze in a comparative perspective, Kenan Evren's and Turgut Özal's conceptualizations of secularism, bearing in mind the nature of secularism and the role of religion in the Turkish polity have changed significantly in the 1980s and the early 1990s. For Evren, secularism is not only a guarantee of the religious freedom and conscience but also it protects Turkish national unity. But Özal puts an emphasis on the freedom side of secularism and on the protection of the rights of pious Muslims.

As a parallel development to the softening of the Kemalist secularism in the 1980s, Islam seems to have a function of civil religion for both Evren and Özal but with the difference that while the former emphasizes the moral side of Islam, the latter considers Islam as a civil societal matter and tries to harmonize religious values with democratic political values. The study is also intended to show the influence of Ziya Gökalp's system of thought to both Evren's and Özal's conceptualization of secularism.

## ÖZET

Mevcut çalışma, Kenan Evren ve Turgut Özal'ın laiklik anlayışlarını, 1980 lerde ve 1990 ların başında Türk siyasasında laikliğin yapısının ve dinin rolünün önemli ölçüde değiştiğini göz önünde bulundurarak karşılaştırmalı bir şekilde analiz etmeyi hedeflemektedir. Evren'e göre laiklik sadece din ve vicdan hürriyetinin garantisi olmakla kalmaz aynı zamanda Türk milli bütünlüğünü muhafaza eder. Özal ise laikliğin hürriyet yanına ve dindarların haklarının korunmasına vurgu yapar.

Kemalist laikliğin 1980'lerde yumuşamasına paralel bir gelişme olarak, Evren ve Özal için İslam uygar din (civil religion) fonksiyonunu üstlenmiş görünmektedir şu farkla ki: Evren İslamın ahlaki (moral) yanını vurgularken Özal İslamı sivil/toplumsal bir mesele olarak ele alır ve dini değerlerle demokratik siyasal değerleri uyumlu hale getirmeye çalışmaktadır. Çalışma Ziya Gökalp'in düşünce sisteminin Evren ve Özal'ın laiklik anlayışlarındaki etkisini de göstermeyi amaçlamaktadır.

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## INTRODUCTION

Secularism as one of the most controversial issues of the modern Turkish politics, has changed significantly since its acceptance as a structural requirement of modernization process in the Ottoman Empire. The secularization process in the Ottoman times was in the direction of bifurcation of religion and state. The founders of the Turkish Republic had a "traditional-versus-modern" type of approach, equating modernization with Westernization and took religion as an impediment to change and regarded the dualism of the late Ottoman times as unworkable. For the Kemalists, religion was not supposed to have even the function of "civil religion" for the modern Turkish polity.

Transition to democratic politics inevitably brought a moderation in the understanding of secularism and utilization of religion for electoral consideration. With the moderation of secularism, Turkish polity has witnessed a revival of religion as a political input in the late 1940s. With the emergence of the National Salvation Party religion no longer was a solely a matter of individual concern, it was a political factor that should have a considerable influence on the political arena, performing a function of checks and balance. The utilization of religion by the military regime (1980-1983) was an integral part of the project that aimed at creating a new system of ethics in the post-1980 Turkish polity.

In the first chapter, I explain the related concepts of secularism, laicism and byzantinism and the historical background of the Turkish experience with secularism in order to inaugurate the reader to the theoretical and historical framework for this study.

In the second chapter, I study Evren's notion of secularism, his attitude towards religion and religious groups, reminding that Evren's conceptualization of secularism is discussed without differentiating the period of his leadership of the military regime and his presidency. The only difference to be noted is his hardening attitude towards religious groups and his active participation in the debate of Islamic state.

In the third chapter, I study Özal's notion of secularism, his liberal attitude towards religion, namely liberal concept of civil religion and his tolerance and utilization of religious groups. Of course Özal puts more emphasis on the liberal conceptualization of secularism during his presidency rather than his prime ministry.

The final chapter is to briefly assess and compare Evren's and Özal's conceptualizations of secularism with a special reference to Mustafa Kemal's notion of secularism. This chapter also takes Ziya Gökalp's system of thought as a point of reference in the comparison of Evren's and Özal's conceptualizations of secularism.

## CHAPTER I

# THE TURKISH SECULARISM : A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Secularism is one of the most controversial issues in Turkish politics. Turkey from its de facto acceptance of secularism in the Tanzimat Period onwards has come to witness an understanding of the principle of secularism, the nature of which has been subject to change by time. The present chapter is aimed at analyzing the Turkish experience of secularism with the assumption that it is the relations, the interactions between the state and religion, which have determined the nature of secularism and such interactions changed significantly in the last 150 years.

Before discussing the Turkish experience of secularism it might be useful to give definitions of related concepts such as laicism, secularism and byzantinism.

### 1.1 Concepts

Laicism, which derives from the Greek "laos" ( people) and "laikos" (lay), was a concept which emerged from French constitutional practice in the nineteenth century. It referred to the necessity that the state refrain from lending its positive support to any one religious denomination. It was considered to have been fully achieved in

France in 1905 with the definitive separation of church and state (Mardin, 1981: 191). In Turkey, as Mardin (1981:191) correctly observes that laicism amounted to more than the official disestablishment of religion since Muslims did not dispose of an autonomous religious institutions such as the Catholic Church which would carry its religious functions independently of the state .

Secularism was derived from the Latin "saeculum" which meant "age" or "generation." Secularism is an ethical system founded on the principles of natural morality and independent of revealed religion or supernaturalism. Another definition is that secularization refers to a displacement of religious beliefs, ritual and sense of community from the moral life of society (The Social Science Encyclopedia, 1985:737). Secularism also embodies the spirit of reasoned inquiry: a sustained effort to construct a rational picture of the universe on the basis of scientifically established knowledge. In short, in Ergil's terms : "secularism is a revolt against theological and metaphysical absolutes and universals, the same trend may be charted in the attitudes toward social and political institutions." (Ergil : 1)

Although there has been a disagreement on the distinction between laicism and secularism, it might be useful to use Berkes' conceptualization. According to Berkes (1964:5), while the underlying emphasis in the word secularism is on the idea of worldliness, the term laicism emphasizes the distinction of laity from the clergy. Both terms, however refer to two aspects of the same thing. They were used in connection with the problems of duality, opposition or separation of church and state. Secularization or laicization which

are the same thing in his mind, meant the transformation of persons, offices, properties, institutions, or matters of an ecclesiastical or spiritual character to a lay or worldly position. On the other hand Turkish secularism (laicism) is not only a legal-institutional separation between religion and state but is also a fundamentally rationalist and positivist attitude toward life and a non-religious way of defining the basis of a political community. Thus it would be more appropriate to employ secularism rather than laicism in explaining the Turkish experience with secularism.

The basic conflict in secularism in a non-Christian society is not necessarily between religion and the world as is the case in Christian experience. The conflict is often between the forces of tradition which tend to promote the domination of religion, and the forces of change. Such a struggle can take place in a society where there is no organized church like that of Turkey, the core of tradition in Muslim societies is Islam which is challenged by the various forces of modern civilization (Berkes, 1964: 6; İnalcık, 1969: 467). In fact, secularism in the Ottoman Empire emerged as a structural requirement of modernization process.

In Islam, there is no distinction between religion and state. Religion and state are believed to be fused together. Religion is considered as the essence of the state and the state is conceived as the embodiment of religion. That is the reason for the persistence of religious question in Turkish politics more than a half century after the formal separation of religion and state. Islam is something more than a religious belief system. In western world, religion is a compartment of life reserved for certain matters and separate from

other spheres of life. An attentive look at the history of Islam may easily recognize this nature of Islamic theology in the evolution of the relationships between political and religious institutions. The Khawarij and the Shiite sects are the final outcome of the interactions between politics and theology in the setting of an Islamic state. Hence, each member of the Islamic community (*umma*) is both a religious and a political man. As Smith (quoted in Toprak, 1981:20) points out, the relationship between the religious and political institutions in a society is not only determined by the historical circumstances but is also dependent on the extent to which the theology as well as the organization of a particular religion encourages its involvement in political activity. In his classification of major religions of the world, "church religions" and "organic religions", he regards Islam as an organic religion which does not have a well-established church with a separate identity from the rest of society and is merged with the social system. Seen in this light, the absence of an autonomous religious organization in traditional Muslim societies including the Ottoman Empire, has constituted a major difficulty in the distinctions between religion and the social system. Such a blurring distinction between religion and social system facilitates, as it is discussed in Chapter 4, the changes in the role of religion in the modern Turkish polity.

In classical Arabic as well as in Ottoman Turkish, Lewis (1988:2) states there are no pairs of words corresponding to spiritual and temporal, lay and ecclesiastical (1), religious and secular. It was not until the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and then under the influence of Western ideas and institutions that new words are found

first in Turkish and then in Arabic to express the idea of secular (2). One may therefore argue that secularization in a Muslim country means a withdrawal, in any compartment of life, from the jurisdiction of the religious authority.

Another related concept is Byzantinism which refers to a system where the state has the control over the religion as the latter is made subservient to the former. It follows that byzantinism in this sense is just the opposite of theocracy- a system where religion governs (Bulaç, 1994: 68; Selami, 1976: 25).

For analytical purposes the development of secularism in Turkey may be divided into two eras, the Ottoman and the Republican era.

## 1.2 The Ottoman Era

The Ottoman state was the embodiment of Islam as the unity of religion and state found its expression in the term *din-u-devlet*. (Berkes, 1969: 9-10; Mardin, 1992a: 117; Toprak, 1981: 26). The Islamic nature of the state was consolidated and formalized with the title of Caliph self claimed by Sultan Selim. From then on the Ottoman Sultan was not only represented the highest temporal authority on Muslim territories, but also personified *the umma* in himself. He was thus entrusted with the task of carrying out the requirements of *Shariah* (Islamic canon law). His own secular directives, *Kanunnames*, had necessarily to be in compliance with the provisions of *Shariah*. The Sultan-Caliph in applying *Shariah*



and determining the compatibility of his decrees with Islam was assisted by the *Sheikh-ul-Islam*.

Despite this Islamic nature of the state, *ulema* (religious clergy) did not constitute an autonomous organization from the state. They were much more clearly integrated with the apparatus of the state. As Mardin (1981:194) tells, through their control of education, of the judiciary and of the administrative network, *ulema* acted as agents of the state and indirectly ensured the state's control of social life. The Empire was also witnessed the institutionalization of the so called *adab* tradition, that is, a secular and state oriented tradition according to which secular rule was based on the measuring rods of "necessity" and "reason" (Heper, 1985:5). Some theoreticians of the Ottoman Empire can link the secular principle of the Ottoman state in the first place to the bureaucratic tradition of Middle Eastern Empires going back to the ancient Iranian empires (Inalcik, 1969: 438; Mardin, 1992a: 166). In the second place it is related to Central Asiatic Turkish concept of state which cherished state authority above everything else and identified the state with the *toru*, the law of the state. In fact, the Ottoman bureaucrat saw his duty as the preservation of the state, and the idea of the supreme interest of state paved the way for secular legislation outside the jurisdiction of *Shariah* (4). It should be added that when the Ottomans fully realized the extent of Western supremacy in the eighteenth century, the *küttab* (bureaucrats) were given the highest positions of authority. Reşid Pasha who opened the reformist era called the *Tanzimat* together with its able followers in 1839 were all *küttab* (Inalcik, 1969:440). So that the prestige and position of the *ulema* were

undermined by the domination of the bureaucrats. The *ulema* were progressively eased out of the central process of decision making. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, *küttab* were gradually to be denied all but marginal roles in the administration, the judiciary and the educational system (Mardin, 1981:196).

Beginning in the seventeenth century and continuing up until its demise, secularization policies in the Ottoman times were initiated at a time when the European powers arisen as a result of their advance in scientific and technical areas. Second secularization policies occurred as a result of the revival of the *adab* tradition in its most secular forms after Mahmut II, now recognizing reason as the sole criterion in promulgating policy and placing emphasis on enlightenment and education (Heper, 1985:45). The notion of reform was defined in terms of a process of Westernization involved an unpronounced acceptance of secularism. As the concern here is more with the nineteenth century secularizing orientation, a brief account of secularization policies is given below.

### 1.2.1 The Tanzimat Period

The Tanzimat period began with *Hatt-i Hümayun of Gülhane* and ended with the proclamation of the First Ottoman Constitution. *Kanun-i Esasi* brought some new, by their very nature, secular regulations. The regulations originated in the Sublime Port as some specific administrative, financial, legal and educational policies. These reforms as Mardin (1981:197) argues, were the consequence of the characteristic attitude of Ottoman secular bureaucracy in matters which concerned the restoration of the power of the state i.e.

if Western institutions could rejuvenate the state, they would be adopted. With Tanzimat Reformation, the Ottoman state accepted that society was made up of equal Ottoman citizens. The creation of an Ottoman citizenship meant that the muslims ceased to be the *Millet-i Hakime*, the ruling or dominant nation (Mardin, 1991:13-19). Many of the privileges which had previously been granted to the Muslim population were abolished while similar ones previously given under various edicts at various times to the non-Muslim population on either a religious or a sectarian basis were reviewed and their validity was confirmed. Although the Tanzimat Reforms had declared loyalty to the *Shariah*, it also promulgated some new laws which reduced the significance of religious institutions in the field of law, education and administration.

Secularization in the legal proceedings in the period included efforts to codify law (to establish legal codes that were written and distinguishable from religious provisions) and to establish secular courts. Some of these codes were domestic (the Land Code of 1858 and the *Mecelle*), while others were extracted from European, most notably from French legal systems (the Commercial Code, the Penal Code, and the Code of Penal and Legal Procedure). In adopting such codes, *Shariah* continued to be the measuring rod, those deemed anti-Shar'i were rejected. As Toprak (1981: 31) points out: "During the Tanzimat and the following periods, a number of secular codes were enacted in the fields of commercial, penal and civil law that supplemented the religious ones. At the same time, a parallel was made to establish secular courts where the new codes would be applied. Whereas the *Shariah* were left under the jurisdiction of the

Sheikh-ul-Islam (except in the 1917-1920 period when they were tied to the Ministry of Justice)."

The Tanzimat Period added new secular schools to those that had been created in the first half of the eighteenth century beside the *medreses*: A new school, the School of Administration (*Mülkiye*) and the *Rüşdiye* were the cornerstone of the Tanzimat's policy for training secular cadres who will promote secularization policies in the following years. Although the emergence of a dualistic structure in law, education and administration may be criticized as one of the major weaknesses of the Tanzimat reformation, as Mardin (1990:182) correctly argues the success of it in saving judiciary and educational institutions from the monopoly of the *ulema* and in creating new secular institutions should not be underestimated. These developments were the crucial steps taken towards further secularization in the Ottoman state .

Secularization of the Tanzimat was in the direction of bifurcation, not separation of religion and state as Berkes (1964: 480) underlies:

Secularization throughout the Tanzimat (and Meşrutiyet) period(s), regarding the separation of religion and state, was not in the direction of the severance of ties between two distinct spheres of life belonging to two distinct authorities and institutions. Rather it was one of bifurcating a whole, through a series of changes in one sector of life while another sector of life (with which religion identified itself) remained static and lost its superiority over the other and its institutional support (Khilafat and Shariah).

### 1.2.2 The Constitution of 1876

The significance of *Kanun-i Esasi*, the first constitution in Islamic history is that the *Tanzimat* reforms were constitutionalized, though the Constitution did not represent progress in the *Tanzimat*'s secularism. In fact, the state which *Kanun-i Esasi* had set up was neither secular nor religious. The functioning of state had been made dependent on *Kanun-i Esasi* created by human rationality, not based directly on *Shariah*, in this sense, *Kanun-i Esasi* was secular. On the other hand, it became the legal document for the rejection of the idea of a secular state and the legal affirmation of the Islamic aspect of the Turkish state. Articles 3,4,5 and 13 placed the ruler's temporal powers (which were not restricted by the Constitution) on the basis of a religious legitimacy. Islam was declared to be the official religion of the state (Article 2); the Sultan-Caliph was defined both as the head of state and the head of religion (Article 4); and according to Article 7, he was charged with the task of executing the *Ahkam-i Shariyya* (judgments or provisions of Islam); and according to Article 64 the *Ayan Meclisi* (Chamber of Notables) was charged with the task of refusing to approve the drafts that stood in contradiction with *umuru diniyya* (religious precepts) (Başgil, 1982:183).

It follows that Islam continued to be "an above law" to the extent it had been prior to 1876, but it increasingly lost its capacity to shape directly policies after that date.

### 1.2.3 The Hamidian Times

Interestingly enough, the Sultan Hamid's period had been an amalgamation of secular and Islamist policies with a peculiar emphasis on secular ones. Although the ideology of the Hamidian period was pan-Islamist (6) calling on all the Muslims of the Empire to unite against the West and exclusive in the definition of the non-Muslim nationalities, Abdulhamid II continued on the modernization and secularization of the Ottoman state apparatus. Mardin (1981: 201) argues that Abdulhamid II "continued the work of the Tanzimat statesmen for the rationalization and modernization of the state apparatus. He lent his support to the expansion of secular courts and secular education. He left the medrese to stagnate: by the end of his reign they were poorly staffed, poorly financed institutions which served as a refuge for draft-dodgers." Hamit's support for institutional modernization and secular education gave rise to new, unanticipated attitudes which encouraged the radicalization of persons trained in these institutions. One may say that, such tendencies were to take Turkey into laicism in the Republican period.

The strength of the Hamidian state was so embracing that religion became an ideological tool in the hands of the Caliph, not an *end* itself. Thus, as Ergil states, in practice, the control of the religion over temporal affairs came to an end during the reign of this celebrated Islamist monarch. This strength of state, according to Berkes, was the beginning of a separation of religion and state in the minds of the Young Turks who introduced further secularization policies with positivist understanding of religion: "...by establishing the omnipotence of his devlet (state), Abdulhamid imperiled the din

(religion). There came into existence a cleavage in the minds of the intellectuals between the two" (Berkes, 1964:290).

#### 1.2.4 The Young Turk Period

The Young Turks who came to power with the revolution of 1908 had a different program from those of the Ottoman Westernists and the Islamists, the other two movements of thought in the Meşrutiyet period. According to the Young Turks who were under the influence of the writings of Ziya Gökalp, it was necessary to secularize those institutions that had been put under *Shariah* and made it identical with Islam. Modernization efforts could only bear fruit following the elimination process of these anachronistic institutions (Ergil :42). Their program led to the exclusion of the *Sheikh-ul-Islam* from the cabinet, the separation of religious courts from the *Seyhulislamate* and their attachment to the ministry of justice; the placing of the administration of pious foundations under the authority of a member of the Cabinet; and the separation of *medrese* from the *Seyhulislamate* and their administration by the ministry of education. In the Young Turk era, Turkish nationalism emerged as a strong and eventually dominant current of opinion, adding a completely new dimension to the older controversy between the Westernists and the Islamists. From that perspective, in fact, the rise of Turkish nationalism facilitated greatly the introduction of the radical secularizing reforms of the Kemalist Republic. If one contribution of the Young Turk generation to the development of secularism in Turkey was its commitment to rational-scientific

thought, another was the growth of the idea of the "Turkish nation" as the basis of political community (Özbudun, 1984:33).

### 1.3 The Republican Era

The secularization policies of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk can be divided into two periods: an early transitional period and a period of radical policies of secularization.

#### 1.3.1 Early Practice

The 1920-23 period signifies a transition from an empire to a nation state. The transition occurred at a time when the Nationalist Government of Ankara waged a War of Independence. The Nationalists used Islam as the best cement available at that time, to rally mass support, and national unity against the infidel could be attained only with the use of Islam as a politically unifying force (Toprak, 1981:63). The religious leaders or clerics of the time played a "middleman" role, and served as a linkage between the central government and the provinces in an attempt to secure the cooperation of the people. The cooperation of the clerics in turn was secured by the Ankara Government through the use of religious symbolism which included most notably the Sultanate and the Caliphate (Ahmad, 1991:6; Lewis, 1961: 40; Mardin, 1992a: 30). The declared goal of the war was to save the two offices said above. This was confirmed in the decisions taken in the Sivas and Erzurum Congresses and the opening ceremonies of the First Grand National Assembly in 1920 (Toprak, 1981: 64) (7).



However, subtle policies to guide the future secularization of the state machinery were undertaken first in this transitional stage. The first step was taken on April 23, 1920 with the abolition of the Office of the *Sheikh-ul-Islam*, and creation of the *Din İşleri ve Evkaf Vekaleti* (Ministry of Religious Affairs and Pious Foundations) under the GNA. The second step was taken with the insertion into the 1921 Constitution of the provision that: "Sovereignty belongs without reservation to the people (or nation)." The provision was a subtle way of stating that the base of legitimacy was no longer divine, the Ottoman Sultan-Caliph as the *Zillullah* (Shade of God) was supplanted by *hakimiyet-i milliye* (national sovereignty). Of course, as some students of Turkish politics mentioned before, what Mustafa Kemal and his reform minded friends (hereafter Kemalists) understood by "nation" and "national" were different from what the religious leaders understood by them. This difference between Mustafa Kemal's secular understanding (*ulus*) and the clerics' religious one (*umma*) appeared crucial as Mustafa Kemal later made his intentions more visible through his policies (Mardin, 1992a :66; Berkes, 1964:493; Şaylan, 1992: 82). The third step was the abolition of Sultanate on November 1, 1922. The law that abolished Sultanate separated the two titles, the title of Caliph and that of Sultan. The law also stipulated that the new Caliph would be elected by the GNA from among the members of the Ottoman dynasty. The significance of these laws was that they constituted the first official revision in the organization of institutional Islam. The minister of Religious Affairs and Pious Foundations and the Caliph were elected by the GNA and were responsible to it. Thus religion became part of the national sovereignty.

### 1.3.2 Secularization Policies Under the Single Party Era (1923-1946)

The secularization policies undertaken by the Kemalists were multifaceted, yet interrelated. They are not restricted to those policies relating to the relegation of Islam to the private sphere. Different policies initiated thus may be seen as integral parts of a whole. Attempts to weaken the institutional Islam and to destroy tarikats (religious orders) were combined with efforts to secularize educational, legal, social, and political systems. The implementation of these policies, especially those relating to Islam, was radical and Jacobean (Şaylan, 1992:82). This was mainly a result of the impact of the French revolutionaries. Mustafa Kemal took religion as an impediment to change and regarded the dualism of the late Ottoman times as inefficient.

Secondly, secularism as had been the case in the late phase of the Empire, was seen as an integral part of Westernization, with the difference however that the founders of the Republic had a "traditional-versus-modern" type of approach, equating modernization with Westernization, religion with conservatism (as a deliberate resistance to change), change with anti-clericalism. Actually clericalism in the eyes of Mustafa Kemal connoted the exploitation of the religious feelings of the people.

Thirdly, Kemalist secularism did not accompany with laicism --the separation of jurisdiction between state and religion and the latter's transformation into a civil / societal matter. The steps taken in these processes:

(1) Weakening of Institutional Islam. Institutional Islam was relegated on March 3, 1924, to a department level with the abolition of Caliphate and the creation of *Diyanet İşleri Reisliği* (the Presidency of Religious Affairs), attached to the Office of the Prime Minister, and of *Evkaf Umum Müdürlüğü* (the Directorate General of Foundations), an independent agency, much of the financial support of which came from the government. In Toprak's words, "[t]hrough these offices, religious functionaries, religious property, and private *vakıfs* were put under state control" (Toprak, 1981: 46). The common purpose of these policies was to cut Islam off its political and social dimensions, that is, to depoliticise the religion. Islam's political and social dimensions had come to be represented by the institutions created in its name. Thus Islam to a large extent de-institutionalized. In addition to the legitimating function of Islam, an attempt was made to destroy the social function that it had come to play as a link between the central government and the people. The policies in question were also aimed at preventing any potential counterrevolution of a religious nature (Şaylan, 1992:80). The Nationalists thought that the clerics who had proved their influence on the people during the War posed a menacing threat to the Republican regime. The weakening of institutional Islam and the taking of what remained from that religion under the state control was a logical conclusion.

(2) Secularization of Education With the enactment of the so called *Tevhid-i Tedrisat* (Law for the Unification of Education) on March 3 1924, the medreses and other religious schools were closed and all schools were tied to the Ministry of Education. Thus religious

education became part of national education system. Mustafa Kemal himself stated that it was the *mektep* rather than the *medrese* where one should complete religious education (Köker, 1993: 167). The rationale behind unification of education had the purpose of disseminating the Kemalist principle. In other words the new educational system was to be the means of creating a new society composed of enlightened, rational, and anti-clerical individuals. After all, in the Kemalists eyes the school was the best available channel for "cultural transformation" (Toprak, 1981: 51). The creation of such an "absent minded society" (Köker, 1993: 163), one whose ties with its Ottoman past was broken necessitated the change of alphabet from the Arab to the Latin script. As Ahmad (1993: 80) thinks that the most iconoclastic reform of secularization policies was the change of script. At a stroke, even the literate people were cut of their past (8). Secularization of education went on with the "turkification" of history and language: Society for the Study of Turkish History (*Türk Tarih Kurumu*) was created in 1931 with the aim of studying the pre-Ottoman Turkish history and Turkish Linguistic Society (*Türk Dil Kurumu*) was set up in 1932 with the purpose of purifying the Turkish language from those of Arabic and Persian words.

(3) Secularization of Law and Social Life In 1924, the *Shariah* courts were abolished, distinctly secular courts were abolished, and the court system was unified under the Ministry of Justice. This was followed by the adoption of the Swiss Civil Code and of Obligations. Inheritance, marriage, divorce etc. were no longer governed by the dictates of religion, but by secular laws. The adoption of Western hat and Western styles (1925), the Gregorian calendar (1926), family

names (1934), the adoption of the Swiss Civil Code as an effort to transform the status of women (1926), the change of the weekly holiday from Friday to Sunday (1935), were aimed to "Westernize" the people and the socially based relations between them and to integrate Turkey into the West. In the eyes of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk these reforms were necessary to get rid of ignorance, fanaticism, and to emulate the civilized world. Mustafa Kemal (Nutuk: 738) in one of his speeches, made clear that :

Gentlemen, it was necessary to abolish the fez which sat on our heads as a sign of ignorance, of fanaticism, of hatred to progress and civilization, and to adopt in its place the hat, the customary headdress of the whole civilized world, thus showing, among other things, that no difference existed in the manner of thought between the Turkish nation and the whole family of civilized mankind.

Despite these policies, Islam until 1928 continued to be the state religion, and the GNA was entrusted with the duty of enforcing the principles of *Shariah*. Only in that year it was adopted a proposal suggested by İsmet İnönü and his 120 colleagues for amendments in the 1924 Constitution. Article 2 of that Constitution, which stated the "religion of the state [was] the religion of Islam", was lifted. Article 26 of the same Constitution, which had entrusted the GNA with the duty of "enforcing the provisions of *Shariah*", was also lifted. The constitutional formalization of Turkish secularism came with the revised Constitution of 1937, which stated that the Turkish state was a secular state. Therefore Turkish secularism was introduced as the disassociation of social, economic, political, legal institutions of the state from religious principles.

(4) Reform in the religion A Faculty of Divinity (*İlahiyat Fakültesi*) at the *Dar'ül-fünun* was opened in 1924. With the transformation of the *Dar'ül-fünun* into the University of Istanbul in 1933, an Institute for the Study of Islam (*İslam İncelemeleri Enstitüsü*) was opened in place of the Faculty. However the Institute survived up only until 1936. The purpose in the creation of both was to make possible the study of Islam with scientific criteria and to find means in that religion to reform it.

The basis of Kemalist religious policy was not irreligion, its aim was to end the power of religion and as it is elaborated later in this chapter, of religious groups in political, social and cultural matters and to limit it to the matters of belief and worship. In other words, the Kemalist reformers wanted not to be rid of Islam but to "turkify" it. Stirling (1958: 400) arrives at the conclusion that the Kemalists sought a completely Turkish form of ceremony and compared themselves explicitly to the Protestants. In 1928, the faculty of divinity appointed a committee presided by professor Mehmet Fuad Köprülü to examine the problem of reform and modernization in the Islamic religion. Its report begins with a clear assertion that religion is a social institution, it must meet the needs of life and keep pace with change and development (Lewis, 1961:414). Only one of the recommendations (9) of the committee had a practical consequence, i.e. translation of the *ezan* (the call to prayer) into Turkish which was first put into practice in 1931 and became legally compulsory in 1941.

(5) Abolition of Religious Orders Islam in Turkey has always functioned on two levels: the formal, legal religion of the state which is now represented by the Presidency of Religious Affairs and the popular, mystical religion of masses which found its expression in religious orders. The religious orders has provided a different world view and an interpretation of religion as Mardin (1992b: 94) calls "folk Islam". Although religious orders seem to have rallied to the support of the nationalists in Anatolia, in 1925 the Kemalist reformists abolished the religious orders and their convents were dissolved and their ceremonies were banned. It was from the religious orders, not from the *ulema* that the most dangerous resistance to secularism would come. According to Mustafa Kemal, the survival of the tarikats would be the greatest, most irreparable threat to the cause of progress and reawakening. Again, in one of his speeches, he made clear that:

Gentlemen, while the law regarding the Restoration of Order was in force that took place also the closing of the *tekkes*, of the convents, and of the mausoleums, as well as the abolition of all sects and all kinds of titles such as Sheikh, dervish, so on. One will be able to imagine how necessary, through of these measures was, in order to prove that our nation as a whole was no primitive nation, filled with superstitions and prejudices. (Nutuk: 700)

With Kemalist secularization policies, the duality of late Ottoman times was resolved in favor of Western civilization. The question was no longer that of finding some means to integrate Islamic institutions with the Western ones, the Kemalists rather decided that religious institutions had to be destroyed. Such an understanding stemmed from Mustafa Kemal's identification of the

Ottoman demise with Islam; Islam was responsible, Mustafa Kemal thought, for the fate of the Empire because it resisted change (Toprak, 1981: 38). What was to be done for the Kemalists then was to cut Islam off its political and social dimensions, represented by the institutional and folk Islams. That was necessary to prevent its resurgence as a competing political ideology. Kemalist secularization relating to Islam went beyond its de-politicization. It also included its rationalization: an attempt to create a rational (Western-like), and nationalist Islam.

According to Mustafa Kemal, a drive for an enlightened and humanized Islam was absolutely necessary (Berkes, 1964:483). This effort of religious reformation was evident in the translation of the Qur'an and the *ezan* and in the "Proposals for Reform in Islam" made by a purposely-created committee. The application of the secularization policies was necessarily rigid. The creation of the so-called Independence Tribunals (*İstiklal Mahkemeleri*) and the Martial Law Tribunals (*Sıkıyönetim Mahkemeleri*) and the enactment of the Law Against Treason (*Hiyaneti Vatanîye Kanunu*) and of the Law for the Restoration of Order (*Takrir-i Sükun Kanunu*) all shared the common purpose of preventing or suppressing counterrevolutionary movements like the Sheikh Said rebellion of 1925 and similar ones, all sharing a religious nature (Toprak, 1981: 67). The Progressive Republican Party, the only opposition to the Republican People's Party (RPP), was closed down. This marked the end of multiparty politics for the next 20 years. The Free Republican Party, founded in 1930 by Fethi Okyar, a close friend of Mustafa Kemal was permitted as a tame opposition party. Again the opposition to the regime



coalesced round this party and attacked the secular policy of the government. The ruling elite was alarmed and eventually decided to dissolve the party. A month later, a violent incident of Menemen shocked the secular military-bureaucratic group and the regime became more rigid on the issue of religious opposition.

With the establishment of the Presidency of Religious Affairs (*Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı*), religion became subservient to the state. As regards the fusion of the state and Islam, both before 1928, 1937 and after the latter date, state and religion continued to be fused together. The difference between the Imperial practice and the Republican policy was the reversal of the locus of the control: It was no longer Islam which governed the state but the practice was the other way around (Toprak, 1981: 2). The Empire vanished as a religion-bound state whereas the Republic created a state-bound religion. Kemalist secularism was inconsistent that it did not separate religion and state and it did not let religion have its own autonomous existence. It was the reorganization of the hierarchy of the *ulema* and drastic reduction of its functions to only matters of worship and belief. In that sense, one may think that the Republican secularism did not end the unity of state and religion (*din-u-devlet*).

During the 1930s, the pressure of secularization became very strong indeed. The Sheikh Said rebellion of 1925 and Menemen incident of 1930 proved that the secular reforms had not taken root, the Kemalists decided to take offensive and educate the masses ideologically by emphasizing nationalism and downplaying the role of religion. Islam itself would have to be nationalized, the change of the call to prayer from Arabic to Turkish was a sign of attitude towards

such conception of religion. Ahmad (1988 : 755) argues that the attitude towards religion of the single party regimes in the Europe of the 1930s - Italy, Germany and the Soviet Union- had an impact in Turkey.

### 1.3.3 The Transition to Multiparty Politics (1946-1960)

The restoration of party politics in 1946 compelled the RPP government to change its policy towards religion. The concern of the RPP leaders that the Democrats would capitalize on the issue of religion led to a reappraisal of the party's secularization policies. The party's understanding of secularism, for the first time, was subjected to criticism during the 7th General Congress of the RPP in 1947 (Toprak, 1981 : 77). Some delegates pointed out that in order to strengthen the society's moral foundations it was therefore necessary to accept a more liberal attitude on religious education without fear that this would lead to religious reaction (Mardin, 1991: 32; Karpas, 1959: 280). Thus, the RPP government initiated some liberal policies on the issue of religious education and worship after the Congress. The 1947-49 period saw the preparation of a program for the reopening of religious educational institutions and funding of private religious courses. The establishment of a faculty of divinity, the permission for pilgrimage to Mecca and the reopening of the sacred tombs were the other measures of relaxation on secularism.

With the inception of democratic politics, between 1945 and 1950, eight political parties were established with explicit religious themes in their programs. Religion, for the first time in the Republican history became an input in the political process. All

except the Nation Party (*Millet Partisi*) disappeared from the political arena by 1950. To be noted is the fact that it was the RPP first to have politicized religion for electoral considerations.

The DP government continued the liberal policies it inherited. The Democrats and the Republicans in fact cooperated on two important issues concerning secularism. The first was the lifting in 1950 of the ban on the recital of the ezan in Arabic in 1950 which passed with unanimous vote (Toprak, 1981: 79). The second was an amendment, made in the Turkish criminal code (Article 163). The amendment was about the "outlawed organizational activities aimed at changing the structure of the government on the basis of religious principle" (Toprak, 1981: 74).

Despite the allegation that the Democrats betrayed the Kemalist secularism, such cooperation indicates that the Democrats were no less sensitive to the principle of secularism than the Republicans were. Celal Bayar and Fuat Köprülü stated on several occasions that their party was secularist and against religious obscurantism. When the Democrats came to power and began to retreat from some of stricter policies of secularization, there was no consideration of repudiating fundamental tenets of secularism such as *ulema* power over education. The Democrats were not about to permit anything resembling a counter-revolution, that is to say even a partial return to Islamic Law. When the Sufi Orders which had gone underground began to reappear and attacked the Kemalism such as the Tijaniyya (10), the Democrats took these anti-secular movements seriously enough and the Tijanis were punished for their anti-Atatürk outrages.

What the Democrats did was to re-interpret the existing understanding of secularism, rather than introduce a new one (Şaylan, 1992 : 89). They adopted a moderate understanding of secularism, unlike the militant secularism of the single party era, and continued some relaxation policies: the broadcasting of the Qur'an readings over the state radio, broadening of the scope of religious education and the expansion of the budget of the Presidency of Religious Affairs.

The moderate understanding and application of secularism is evinced in a distinction made by Prime Minister Adnan Menderes between the "principles of Kemalism which had been internalized by the people and which had failed to take neat" (Toprak, 1981: 78). The latter was subjected to change.

The Republicans kept silent about the religious issue in the 1954-57 period. This was indicative of the fact that Islam's role in the political interplay declined (Toprak, 1981: 84). Only in 1957 (and later) when the economic miracle of the DP governments began to fade, the prime minister Menderes manipulated religion for political purposes (Ahmad, 1988 : 756). He extensively used religious themes and accused the RPP of its neglect of Islam during the single party era, while the RPP leadership emphasized that they were the first to have initiated the relaxation on the understanding and implementation of secularism. Menderes cultivated the goodwill of Said-i Nursi and his followers the Nurists.

The controversy over the religious matters were intensified further in 1959. This was mostly a tactic on behalf of the Democrats

designed to divert attention from its mismanagement of the economy. While the Democrats portrayed the Republicans as anti theistic, the latter rejected the contention and in response accused the former of encouraging reactionism (*irtica*). This course of accusation and counter accusation went on until the May 27 military intervention of 1960.

The Democrat's utilization of religion for political ends provided the single most important justification for the military intervention in 1960 (Heper, 1987: 55; Mardin, 1991: 78,124).

In sum, the establishment of the multiparty system in Turkey led, as a consequence, to a more liberal interpretation of secularism. This liberalization did not affect the state institutions, despite allowing wider scope to religious education and practices. It may be said that religious liberalization was a natural outcome of democracy and a necessary adjustment to it. This tolerant attitude of the Democrat Party which was secular in orientation but responsive to the pragmatic needs of the population made it popular among voters. It is therefore the end of the 1960s the religiously based political ideologies in Turkey began to proliferate within the context of this liberalization. The liberalization policies of the Democrats provided suitable grounds for the revival of religious orders and communities which later were the supporters of the religiously-based political parties, namely the National Order Party (MNP) and the National Salvation Party (MSP).

#### 1.3.4 The Emergence of The National Salvation Party(1960-80)

The makers of the 1961 Constitution shared the view with the RPP leadership that the DP betrayed Kemalism by exploiting the religious feelings (Heper, 1987 : 55; Mardin, 1991: 78,124). The solution which they found to prevent the politicians' utilization of religion was two-fold: placing the freedom of belief, conscience, worship and education under constitutional guarantee while at the same time providing a constitutional legitimacy to the previous legal prohibitions on the use of religion for political ends through article 19 (Şaylan, 1992: 98; Toprak, 1981: 91). The 1961 constitution brought preventive measures concerning the use of religion (politicization of Islam) for political purposes. Article 19 states: " No individual can exploit religion in order to change the social, economic, political or legal structure of the state according to religious principles, neither can he use religion to further his personal or political interests."

Therefore what had been institutionalized in the 1946-60 era (more respect for religious belief and worship, and greater allocation of state resources for religious institutions and education) was counterbalanced by more penalty for the politicization of Islam (Toprak, 1981: 92).

The 1960-65 period era was one of silence and tranquillity in the religious issue (Toprak, 1981 : 92). As electoral politics became re-institutionalized by the mid-1960s, the controversy over the politicization of Islam once again turned out to be crucial (Toprak, 1988: 124). For instance, İnönü accused during the 1966 senate

elections the Justice Party (JP), which claimed to be the successor to the DP, of its cooperation with the Nurcu movement. The JP leadership on the other hand, exerted no effort to disprove their connections with religious circles; the party's emblem and its leader Demirel's speeches were designed to show their advocacy of Islam's voice (Toprak, 1981: 92). These in fact were the years when the religious orders came out from under ground, if not completely --a process which had begun in the 1946-60 period (Şaylan, 1992: 99).

With the emergence of the Left-Right cleavage in the 1965 elections, the left represented the anti-clerical while the right the clerical as reminiscent of the case in France (Toprak, 1981:15). The right portrayed the Left as communist-oriented and hence atheistic, while the left accused the right of backing reactionism.

Shift in the RPP's understanding of secularism as a result of the populist Ecevit group's rise to power in the party leadership. Ecevit's populism included a deliberate refraining from escalating the religious issue into a major controversy; he indeed put a halt to the classical RPP slogan publicly known as "secularism is getting out of hand." Ecevit thus brought a new reading of secularism to the RPP, one which does not clash or contradict with the "beliefs of the people." It was this leadership after all which formed a coalition government with the National Salvation Party (NSP) after the 1973 general election.

The National Salvation Party (NSP) was a neo-Islamic party which had an effect of the partial re-traditionalization of Turkish culture along Islamic precepts. It had its origins in the National

Order Party (MNP) which established in 1969 and closed down after 1971 by the Constitutional Court for having used religion for political purposes. It reemerged before the 1973 election under the NSP banner. The NSP leaders had a critical attitude towards the Ottoman and Republican modernization process. They strongly opposed to the identification of modernization with Westernization and introduced a new understanding of modernity which is an amalgamation of Islam and the Heavy Industry Effort (*Ağır Sanayi Hamlesi*). The Westernization process which began with the Tanzimat, according to the NSP, signaled the end of grandeur for Ottoman society. A need for "A Grand Turkey Once Again," therefore, had to pass through the abandonment of reliance on the West both in cultural and economic terms. The "National Outlook" (*Milli Görüş*), the ideology of the NSP, promised a country which would be fully industrialized through economic cooperation with the Islamic world. Of course, the prerequisite of this success was the return to Islam as the basis of social organization (Toprak, 1988 : 125).

It was obvious that the real hidden desire of the NSP was an Islamic state based on the principles of *Shariah* in spite of the party's declaration of loyalty to the principle of secularism (Alkan, 1984: 90). The NSP's approach to the issue of secularism was dualistic in its nature. At the official level, expressed in the speeches of party leaders and in official documents, the NSP favored secularism. At the unofficial level, however, the writings of party ideologists in *Milli Gazete*, the party was in favor of the abolishment of the principle of secularism which contradicts political principles of Islam (11). An important characteristic of the NSP was its link to the Nakshibendi



order and other religious communities (Zarcane, 1993: 103). In that sense, the revival of Islam which has started with the inception of democratic parties took a political form or in other words, the NSP legitimized the political nature of religious interests. Moreover, Toprak (1981: 108) thinks, for the first time in the history of Republic, there has emerged a counter-elite with a different cultural orientation (Islamic culture) than that of Westernists. Since the NSP rejected the notion that Westernization is a requirement of modernization and put an emphasis on the spiritual values (Islam) as the basis of development, it represented a renewal of the 19th century search for an Islamic model of modernity (Toprak, 1981: 104). Mardin (1977: 596) shares also this idea by stating that "the NSP has achieved a sort of successful synthesis with modernization that has been unprecedented in Turkish history."

#### 1.4 Methodology

In this study, secularism as a concept is taken to mean not only a legal-institutional separation between religion and state but also a fundamentally rationalist and positivist attitude towards life and a non-religious way of defining the basis of a political community. Given this definition of secularism, I analyze Evren's and Özal's conceptualizations of secularism with reference to their interpretations of religion and its role in Turkish socio-political life and to their attitudes towards religious orders.

The present study covers a) the speeches of Kenan Evren (1980-1989) and Turgut Özal (1979-1993), published by the Turkish

Grand National Assembly Print house (*TBMM Basımevi*), and Prime Ministry Print house (*Başbakanlık Basımevi*), b) their memoirs, published in *Milliyet* and *Sabah*, respectively and c) a comprehensive survey of *Milliyet*, from 1 November 1989 to 7 April 1993; *Zaman* from 1 January 1987 to 7 May 1993 and; *Briefing*, from 1 January 1990 to 20 April 1993.

## NOTES

(1) As Lewis (1991: 3) aptly points out, even in modern usage, there is no Muslim equivalent to "the church" meaning "ecclesiastical organization." All different words for mosque denote only a building which is a place of worship, not an abstraction, an authority or an institution.

(2) The famous sociologist and nationalist theoretician Ziya Gökalp coined a Turkish Word, *ladini* which was often taken to mean "irreligious" or even "anti religious." Later it was replaced by *layik*, a word borrowed from the French (Lewis, 1988: 117).

(3) Some other students of Turkish politics share the idea that the Ottoman Empire was not a theocratic state, see Mardin, 1991: 89-166; İnalcık, 1969: 438; Turan, 1991: 32; Ortaylı, 1986: 161; see also Lewis, 1988: 29-30 on the question whether the Islamic polity is theocratic.

(4) It was the *küttap* (bureaucrats) who were responsible for preserving the basic concept and institutions of the pre-Islamic Middle Eastern State. They always formed a closely organized group and, at times, did not hesitate to introduce innovations in administrative with the sole purpose of serving state interests. It was they who were responsible for the formulation of the *kanuns* (laws) issued by the Sultan. See İnalcık (1969: 438-440) for further detail.

(5) Two main goals, which the central government had, lie behind such recognition: to be able to mobilize the masses behind the state

and against the local notables, as well as constituting a strategy to appease the Great Powers (Heper, 1985: 39).

(6) The Sultan implemented an intelligent policy, establishing contracts with sheikhs and dervishes, using propaganda to reconcile the Arab population to an Ottoman identity. In Anatolia, at least, the policy did have some success in building some sense of Muslim identity among the subjects.

(7) One fifth of the numbers of the first Grand National Assembly belonged to the class of professional men of religion, and some of them both from the *ulema* and the brotherhoods, played an important place in the Kemalist movement (Lewis, 1961: 402). The nationalist government showed some tolerance to the religious groups -i.e. doing nothing prejudicial to the opening of 465 new medreses in the period under consideration (Şaylan, 1990: 82)

(8) İsmet İnönü's statement is confirmatory in this regard. "The script reform had been made not only to provide ease in reading and writing. We made it rather to change our culture. We made it to get rid of the Arab culture" ( Ceylan, 1990: 178).

(9) The committee recommended pews, cloakrooms and shoes in mosques - it wanted the entire proceeding to be conducted in Turkish and modern sacred instrumental music. See, for detail, (Lewis, 1961: 414-415; Starling, 1958: 400).

(10) For further detail on the Tijaniyya order see (Mardin, 1991: 101; Ahmad, 1991: 11).

(11) On the National Salvation Party and its world view see Jacob M. Landau "The National Salvation Party in Turkey" *Asian and African Studies* 11 (1976) p. 1-57. It is reprinted by the Hebrew Univ. of Jerusalem (Alkan, 1984: 79-102). Ali Yaşar Sarıbay, *Türkiye'de Modernleşme, Din ve Parti Politikası "MSP örnek olayı,"* 1985, Istanbul: Alan yay. and also Toprak, 1981 *Islam and Political Development*.

## CHAPTER TWO

### EVREN'S CONCEPTUALIZATION OF SECULARISM

#### 2.1 Military Intervention of 1980

Some open challenges to Kemalist secularism was one of the reasons for the pre-1980 crisis which brought the military intervention in Turkey. The intervention took place right after the "Save Jerusalem" rally of 6 September 1980 in Konya, organized by the National Salvation Party. At the rally, demonstrators marched in the long robes and fez cap, carrying green flags and shouting slogans for the restoration of an Islamic state and some of the attendants refused to stand for the playing of the national anthem. The Konya meeting was prominent among the reasons Evren gave for the military decision to intervene in politics. Evren (1981: 17; 1990a: 220) noted this fact in his news conference with the following words: "... the incidents at Konya indicated the extent of dimensions of [religious] reactionism. Our notion was awakened by these incidents and realized all the aspects of the danger."

With the conviction the existing parties before the intervention had weakened the state, all political parties were disbanded, their assets seized and their leaders banned from political activity including NSP and Erbakan. The aim of the military government was to strengthen the state and to reestablish the

democracy through a new constitution. The 1982 constitution was designed to prevent the excessive politicization of groups and institutions and to set up a new "polity which develop its own structures for moderating conflict" (Heper, 1965: 145). The reference to " the Turkish historical and moral values" in the Preamble of the 1982 Constitution was a novelty directed to reduce ideological tensions within the society. One may think that the "Turkish moral and historical values" was the use of Islam for political purposes in a distinct fashion: Islam would be used only as a source of ethics and culture but it would not be politicized for short-term political consideration. It is not necessary to reiterate that: "Although absolutely opposed to the utilization of religion for political purposes, the military proved itself to be more congenial on the issue of the role of religion in society than the post-Atatürk bureaucratic intelligentsia had ever been" (Heper, 1985: 134).

The utilization of religion by the military was an integral part of the project that aimed at creating a new system of ethics in the post-1980 Turkish polity. The notion of "solidarity around the idea of Motherland" as one of the two functions of this system of ethics would be further strengthened by emphasizing the unifying feature of Islam (Heper, 1985: 147).

Equally evident is that the military regime, despite its claim to restore "true Atatürkism" which would mean enforcing solidarism in a strict manner and refusing to use religion as a tool, was also willing to use religion to arrest politicization among the young. The military government, by accepting the idea that an individual with belief in God would be less inclined to commit crimes than one

without any Spiritual side, made the religious education compulsory in primary and secondary schools Article 24 of the new Constitution states: "Education and instruction in religion and ethics shall be conducted under state supervision and control instruction in religious culture and moral education shall be compulsory in the curricula of primary and secondary schools."

It is obvious that the military regime had modified the army's previously strict stand on secularism and tried to reconcile religion with Kemalism and secularism. General Evren, as the head of the military government, narrated versus from the Qur'an as a point of reference in an attempt to justify secular policies of the military government and some passages which colored Mustafa Kemal Atatürk as a devout Muslim (Şaylan, 1992: 107) were inserted into the newly-printed textbooks. A report of the Special Expertise Commission on National Culture (*Milli Kültür Özel İhtisas Komisyonu*), printed in 1983 by the State Planning Organization (*Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı*) reveals the military government's approach to religion: "Atatürk strived for the rescue of the people from ignorance, but without leaving religion and morality. It is for this reason that he said that 'Turkish nation must be pious and learn its religion. It is in need of only one place to learn its religion, it is the school.' It is for this reason that he enacted the law for the Unification of Education. The National Security Council relying on this law and directives, made compulsory the courses on religion and morality" (Şaylan, 1992: 111)

These were all efforts to find a middle way between Islam and the state. Without abandoning the official commitment to secularism



(Article 2), the military government had adopted some of the elements of "the Turkish-Islamic Synthesis" as in the case of compulsory religious education (Tapper, 1991: 11; Ahmad, 1993: 184; Şaylan, 1992: 113).

During the late 1970s, a group of intellectuals came together to overcome the apparent dichotomy between the official Commitment to secular nationalism and oppositional proponents of an Islamic identity by projecting the idea of a Turkish-Islamic synthesis around the Intellectuals' Hearth (*Aydınlar Ocağı*). This movement wished to bring traditional values and Islam as a part of national culture to the surface, to peel away the false Western veneer (Tapper, 1991: 11) which was so corrupting and ultimately to recognize a national synthesis of fundamental values. On the other hand, Evren as the head of National Security Council unequivocally noted that there will be no place in the new Turkish polity for "fascism," "Marxism," and "theocracy," and he insisted that "nationalism of Atatürk" should be basis of the Republic of Turkey (Heper, 1985: 144). Evren also expressed a good deal of disquiet about religion both in its social and political aspects. As a consequence, one may say that the military regime had applied a mild form of Islamic doctrines, and it was designed to reinforce rather than contradict state's own authority. Such role of religion as a social cement lies well within the general framework of the military government's proposal of reestablishing democracy in a de politicized society based on law and order.

One of the changes in the military regime's attitude observed in the field of foreign policy where Turkey developed closer relations

with the conservative Muslim countries like Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States. This demonstrated a need for the definition of the official position of the state. For instance, in 1982, Evren told in a meeting in Istanbul of the governors of the Islamic Development Bank that "Turkey is an inextricable part of the Islamic community." It is hard to imagine that any president of Turkey could have made such a pronouncement in earlier decades without provoking a storm of protest.

## 2.2 The Notion of Secularism

Evren has been strongly committed to the principle of secularism and its maintenance as one of the main pillars of the Turkish Republic and Atatürk reforms, as has already been shown in the preceding chapter. Evren clarifies the reasons for the military intervention of 12th September in the following words: "The Operation Flag (*Bayrak Harekatı*) has been made against those who aimed at bringing religious reactionism and other perverted ideologies in order to protect the secular Republic" (1981:17). As would be expected, the importance that Evren places on the principle of secularism is in conformity with the military's perception of themselves as the most ardent upholders and guardians of the ideas of Atatürk. The "Save Jerusalem" rally of the NSP has alarmed Evren to the extent that he took it as "a rehearsal to revitalize the 31 Mart event" (2). According to Evren, secularism, apart from the fact that it is a guarantee for the freedom of religion, also safeguards against religious fundamentalism. Evren (1988: 42) emphasizes the vital importance of secularism in the following way: "As we all know,

secularism is not only a guarantee for the freedom of religion and conscience but also it provides continuation of our national unity and cooperation. At the same time, it constitutes a strong shield which protect our democratic regime against extremist and reactionary religious movements."

For Evren, it would not be correct to say that today there is a possibility of going back to 1500 years earlier and, in his opinions, those who are striving for religious reactionism and Shariah are just a drop in an ocean. Evren (1987a: 413) is also sure that secularism is a world view that all Turkish nation has accepted as a way to be developed and modern. The guarantee of secularism in Turkey is the sincere commitment of all Turkish nation to the parliament, government, mass media, universities and the youth, to the very principle of secularism.

Evren thinks that secular state also prevents the possible state pressures upon human conscience and leave people free to choose their faith and conduct their worship and religious services. Evren (1988: 380) makes this point clear in his answer to the written questions of the correspondent of *Die Welt* newspaper by these statements:

I am not against the people who are devoted to their faith and perform their prayers but according to the principles of our religion, nobody has the right to interfere with the relations between God and individual whether they worship and practice religious duties or not. Our religion does not empower anyone to punish on the grounds that he does not practice their religious duties. Our constitution and laws express the same thing as well.

What is familiar here is a reiteration of the freedom of conscience and worship which is embodied in said Constitution as Article 24 states: "Everyone has the right to freedom of conscience, religious belief and conviction. Act of worship, religious services and ceremonies shall be conducted freely- No one shall be compelled to worship or participate in religious ceremonies and rites, to reveal religious beliefs and convictions-". What is novel here is the reference to religion as a source to justify his definition (understanding) of secularism. One may conclude that this reference to religion is an evident of Evren's utilization of religion for the purposes to oppose the arguments of the religious fundamentalists.

Evren (1988: 322) explicitly holds that, in his various speeches and meetings, secularism necessitates the implementation of state affairs not within the framework of religious rules but on the basis of the separation of religion and state. "Our constitution recognizes the freedom of religion and conscience to all citizens but makes impossible to rule the state in accordance with the religious rules and laws" (Evren, 1988: 322). Evren, here is pointing to a well-known definition of secularism which is included in the preamble of the 1982 Constitution: "That as required by the principle of secularism, there shall be no interference whatsoever of sacred feelings in state affairs and politics." Needless to say, Evren pays enough attention to the fact that the principle of secularism as an integral part of Constitution does not permit the exploitation of religion or utilization of religion for political purposes while ensuring the freedom of religion for other religions as well:

We have a constitutional system that ensures freedom of religion and conscience. We do not

interfere with any body's religion and faith. People belonging to several religions have been living in peace and performing their religious duties without any pressure for long centuries in our country. What we may not permit is the exploitation of religion for political show or for the destruction of the religion. (Evren, 1988: 322)

Evren (1990a: 85) lays a major shame of the blame for the pre-1980 intervention crisis on the religious reactionism and on the political parties that exploited religion for the political purposes. Then he puts his finger on one of the key subjects in the Turkish politics: the use of Islam, "those who exploited Islam and devout Muslims' faith for electoral considerations" asserts Evren "are the primary responsible of the country's current problems and crisis." In the same vein, he (1988: 18) strongly rejects the idea that secularism is irreligion (atheism) as it is voiced by religious circles: "Secularism is not atheism. These who claim that secularism is atheism are the exploiters of our belief, and faith and aim at disintegrating our country by presenting a wrong (false) definition of secularism." Of course, religion itself is beyond the accusation that it plays a role of disintegrating the country. Moreover, Evren (1988: 322) states that religion is a matter between God and individual, and God has not authorized anybody to intervene in the beliefs of human beings in the following way: "Religion, in its essence, is a direct relationship between God and individual as one American thinker said 'God enters by a private door to every individual'." What Evren propose here is a secular interpretation of religion supposed to be a matter of private life but not anything else. Evren's definition of secularism gives no place to the right of religious organization and involvement in politics as his statements (1988: 325) makes it clear: "The

principle of secularism in Turkish Republic suggest to provide and safeguard the freedom of worship and conscience to the individual but to *limit religious activities to the faith and worship* and to give the rights of religion to religion and the rights of state to the state" (my emphasis). As it is elaborated later, the religious activities pertaining the political and social life would mean the repudiation of secularism, namely, the separation of religion and the state.

In Evren's view, secularism has been tightly interrelated to the idea of modernization and the aim of reaching at the level of modern civilization. Without secularism, the goal of modernization, Evren (1987a:250) underlies, will remain just a dream. It should not be forgotten that although the Kemalist identification of modernization with Westernization has lost its significance during 1970s, Evren, due to his strong commitment to the Kemalist view, understands secularism as a world view to be developed and modern. In this respect, he embraces the secularism to get one basic mission of the Republican State when Atatürk put as the idea of the Turkish society: "to elevate the people to the level of contemporary civilization" (Heper, 1985: 50). This conviction is supported by an observation that: "it is not possible to see any non-secular country which catches up with the civilized world" (Evren, 1990: 23).

Evren argues that most of the Islamic countries wish to adopt secularism wholeheartedly, but they do not have a courage, knowing the fact that there will be a turmoil in their countries. Thanks to Atatürk, Evren, in his various speeches, notes the fact that Turkey today represents an exceptional political model articulating a Muslim society and a secular democracy together (Evren, 1988: 244).

It is true to say that whenever Evren talks about secularism, religious fundamentalism appears in his words as a significant phenomenon. In fact, Evren (1987a: 253), in his written message for the new year 1987, equates religious fundamentalism with reactionism or obscurantism: "Those who exploit religion to establish a *Shariah* state and struggle with secularism are religious reactionaries or obscurantists." Looked from this perspective, religious fundamentalism as an enemy of the secular regime is as dangerous as communism. Evren (1990d: 102) states: "The goal of religious reactionism (*irtica*) and communism is to abolish the secular and democratic parliamentary regime which based on the respect for the basic rights and freedoms of human beings." With the Islamic resurgence in the late 1980s, Evren concludes that in some respects religious reactionism menaces a formidable threat to the secular regime and it is much more dangerous than communism because the former is retrogressive whereas the latter is progressive (Evren, 1990d : 102). What is noteworthy in Evren's approach to religious revivalism is that he has always used a very negative terminology about religious movements, even not mentioning the word of religious fundamentalism but fanaticism, obscurantism (*mürteci, yobaz* or *gerici*). One may infer that this is a dichotomy of "gerici" and "ilerici" belonging to the "modernist and progress-oriented" mind of the Republican elite.

Stemming from the assumption that religious reactionism and underdevelopment are necessarily interwoven, Evren (1987a: 337) argues that the reason for the advancement of Western countries is their success in getting rid of religious reactionism

(fanaticism): "Western countries have fought against fanatic attitudes of clergy. They have eventually become successful in breaking the chains of underdevelopment but unfortunately we have failed in rescuing ourselves from the effects of obscure fanaticism." Evren further claims that the underlying factor in backwardness of the Ottoman Empire is the religious fanaticism by making use of some examples from the Ottoman history. Evren (1987: 337) comes up with the conclusion that it is the fanatic clergy who caused a delay in the introduction and usage of printing, and the same clergy are responsible from the failures of the Ottoman armies at war with Mehmet Ali Pasha who, for instance, saying that there should not be any attack on Friday. Evren (1983: 81) in his public speeches goes further in his accusation of the Ottoman clergy: "Once a time, a *fatwa* was issued that the language of paradise (will be) is Arabic or Persian. That's why some Arabic and Persian words had entered into our language. Our many books and poems had been written or composed in that language." It should be also mentioned that while Evren holds clergy responsible for the Ottoman underdevelopment, he makes a distinction between religion itself and the clergy. What Evren (1987a: 337) underlies is that although religion encourages people to seek for science, knowledge even if it is in China, the responsible for such underdevelopment are the *hodjas* (clergy) who are willing to have a great say in state affairs. It is interesting to see that Evren, as part of his campaign against religious fundamentalism, discusses publicly the arguments of Cemaleddin Kaplan (3), the former *mufti* of Adana and tries to refute Kaplan's arguments with his limited knowledge of religion. As a president of Turkey Evren with his addressing to Kaplan's fundamentalist



arguments, ranging from his attacks on Atatürk to the acceptance of Friday as a holiday, brings the issue of Islamic state into the Turkish agenda. It is almost needless to say that this is a novelty that has been unprecedented in the history of Republic, the fact remains that "if Evren had not mentioned Kaplan's name, this man would have no influence." (Mumcu, 1987 : 207)

Taken as a whole Evren has always considered the military as the guardian of the Republic and the principle of secularism against any threat of Islamic revolution coming from religious fundamentalism, as he states in the following way: "The sole *raison d'être* of the Turkish Armed Forces is to defend this country as an indivisible whole against both its internal and external enemies" (quoted in Heper, 1985 : 140).

### 2.3 Religion

Evren (1990b : 33) is a son of *medrese* (religious school) graduated father who did not prefer to be a clergy, but rather a civil servant. Evren does not hesitate to emphasize his father's religious origin in his public speeches in order to pursue that he is not against Islam and pious Muslims, and he makes use of it for his explanations and speeches on the subjects related to religion. It seems that, in the light of his explanations, in his memoirs, he personally is not a practicing Muslim with the exception of his pilgrimage to Mecca (4) in 1983 as a president which has been unprecedented in the Republic. It was forbidden to take photos of his pilgrimage, on the ground that it is against the principle of secularism (1990d : 55).

Evren has an understanding of religion that as a unifying and integrating function in a given society. In that respect, it provides solidarity, unity and coherence to construct a peaceful and just society. Looked at from this particular perspective, religion may serve as a guarantee of national unity and survival in case of any threat and crisis. Evren (1988: 313) argues:

Our religion appreciates science and reason, suggests the happiness of all humanity and harmonious and peaceful living together of societies. Our religion has unifying and integrating characteristics that are sufficient to overcome the several problems and crisis we had and we may have [in the future]. These values that give an extraordinary essence to our religion should be protected and practiced not only in the days of religious festivals but also in every moment of our life with the same enthusiasm, care and sensitivity and I believe that this will be the main factor at reaching to the enlightened days.

One may conclude that such understanding of religion involves a similarity to "Turkish-Islamic Synthesis" which consider Islam as a source of solidarity and the antidote against the leftist ideologies. A relevant development is that Evren in his public speeches, tries to inculcate the moral values and social behaviors he considers important for the Turkish public life by reading some verses from Qur'an. Evren (1988: 313) refers religion as a source of moral values in the following way: " Our religion suggests the happiness of all humanity and a harmonious and peaceful living together. Islam is a religion that sees everybody as brother and forbid disorder, mischief, lie, gossip, and all the other evils. It is the last and most perfect religion that brings responsibility to human behaviors." Thus, Parla (1991) may come up with the claim that

Evren's statement about " Turkish historical and moral values" are defined religiously yet indirectly.

What is more significant in Evren's utilization of religion is his attempt to show how Atatürk is religious and not against Islam by reading some passages from Atatürk's memoirs. According to Evren those who try to present Atatürk as irreligious are the enemies of the republic and they indeed are irreligious. Atatürk was a person who stated several times that Islam is a most perfect religion and he saved Islam from disappearance under the foreign domination (1987a: 374).

Evren employs religious arguments, from Qur'an and the sayings (*Hadith*) of the Prophet Mohammed not only to struggle with the misperceptions of the religious rules, superstition and ignorance but also to achieve some secular state goals in southern and eastern Anatolia. His speeches cover a wide range of subjects are as follows: family planning, prevention of sex discrimination in education, mobilization of literacy, improvement of stock-breeding, organ transfer, construction of schools, child health, anarchy and terrorism, tooth filling, danger cutting the nails at nights.

To take an example, Evren does not accept the idea that birth control is a sin and prohibited by religion and draws attention to the fact that freedom of abortion has given after the military intervention of the 1980 (Evren, 1987: 4-5).

Evren is in favor of developing close ties with Islamic countries in economy and commercial areas provided that the fundamentalist Iran or conservative Islamic regimes will not interfere

in the domestic affairs of Turkey. Evren (1988: 367) continues: "We are not interested in the political regimes that neighboring countries and other Islamic countries adopt to rule their countries. We may develop friendship (closer relations) with any country which recognizes our national unity and does not interfere with our domestic affairs. We do not care whether they are ruled *Shariah* or not."

Such a pragmatic attitude reveals the underlining rationale for the reason behind Turkey's participation under Evren's presidency in the summit meeting of Organization of Islamic Conference (*İslam Konferansı Örgütü*) in Saudi Arabia at the level of prime ministry instead of foreign ministry in 1984 and Evren's presidency over its economic branch İSEDAK (*İslam Ülkeleri Ekonomik Danışma Kurulu*). Thus, Islamic nature of Pakistani State did not affect the intimate friendship between Evren and Ziya ul-Hak but at the same time, Evren has always put a stress on the economic and commercial aspects of developing closer ties with Islamic countries especially in his messages to foreign newspapers he assured that Turkey's only interest is economic and commercial, nothing else. It should be added that only exception to this policy is the Iranian case. Evren has always been suspicious of real intentions of the Iranian Islamic regime which aims at spreading the Islamic revolution all over the Middle Eastern countries. One may conclude that Evren's approach towards Iran has two aspects, namely domestic and foreign. In foreign aspect, Evren has considered Iranian revolution as an internal matter of Iranian people since the military takeover of 12th September (Evren, 1981: 40) and it has nothing to

do with the economic relations between Turkey and Iran. In domestic aspect, Evren has severely criticized the regime in Iran for pursuing an offensive policy against the Turkish secular regime and supporting reactionary movements in Turkey (Evren, 1990c: 16). For Evren Iran's aim is therefore the dissolution of the Turkish secular state and its replacement by a fundamentalist one, similar to Khomeini regime.

Some statements made by Iranian State officials, Khomeini, against Atatürk irritates him and Evren (1990d: 469) uses then harsh words about the Iranian regime and Khomeini: "You [Khomeini] have destroyed Iran and push it back for at least 40-50 years." He makes a contrast between Atatürk and Khomeini: "Atatürk has elevated the Turkish nation which had tended to disappear to a level that it had enjoyed a dignity in the world. You, by contrast, will be noted in the pages of history as a leader who has retrogressed a nation." Evren makes a use of religion in these subjects:

(1) Sectarianism Evren evinces his foremost concern in the employment of religion for the reduction of tensions between Alawi and Sunni sects, attempting to close the gap between these two sects by underlying the unifying the nature of Islam and secularism as well. Division of Alawi-Sunni is an affair of those who want to break our country into the pieces and Evren (1990a: 223) continues: "You must never permit sectarianism. Our religion does not accept sectarianism, there is no place for sectarianism in Islam. So that I call out from here, my citizens whichever sect or order you belong to, embrace each other, kiss each others, we are the children of the

same religion." Evren overemphasizes a sense of belonging to the same religion by making an argument that: "Separation between Alawis and Sunnis emerged as a result of conflict among the Prophet's friends and it is their affairs that we do not have anything to do with their conflict." (1983: 197-198)

Evren calls both teachers and religious scholars (clergy) to struggle against sectarianism and come to the conclusion that there is no place for division in religion like Sunnism or Alawiism:

Teachers and scholars have to bear an important duty starting from schools, they should teach our children that we are brothers and belonging to the same religion -you may not find any division such as Sunnism, Alawiism, Bektashiism and Nurculuk in our religion. Those who are making such a discrimination are committing a sin." (Evren, 1983: 197-198).

Evren (1990d : 226) denounces sectarianism which is an obstacle to the national unity and cooperation and puts an emphasis on secularism as the principle which has been the guarantee for the national unity by making a quotation:

As Atatürk said: 'the success of a nation is possible if the all national forces come into existence on the same direction.' Therefore we may say that the success we have had until now comes from the cooperation and the common action of national forces. If we want to repeat the same success and victories in the future, we should keep the same principle and walk together.

Atatürk has brought secularism to the country for the national unity and cooperation. Evren believes that with the principle of secularism, people may start to live the true religion of Islam. In

the Islamic world the only country that has been following the path of science, reason, and enlightenment is Turkey which has showed the courage and insight to secularize her law, education and state system (Evren, 1990d: 226). In that respect, Turkey represents today an exceptional political model combining society and secular democracy together.

(2) Reformation of Religion Evren seems to be interested in the debate about reformation of religion, though his interest has been a pragmatic one. He has voiced his views in order to present counter arguments against women students who wear head scarves or some fundamentalist calls for a return to Arabic alphabet and an implementation of *Shariah* laws in the country. He has expressed interest in the reformist interpretations of the verses about veiling, usury (*faiz*), the language of Qur'an and its translation, and of slavery. According to Evren, (1983: 31-32) Atatürk was the person who had foreseen the need of modern interpretations and reforms in religion. Furthermore, Evren (1983: 31-32) suggests that Islam as a social institution should be accorded to the needs of modern life and should be kept pace with change: "There are some verses related to slavery, in Qur'an. At that time, there was [the phenomenon of] slavery. Is it possible now? Do we create slavery due to these verses? There are some religious rules that is not possible to implement them in this century" (Evren, 1983: 33). On the subject of veiling: "There is no order of but recommendation of God about covering women's heads. If we accept all written verses in Qur'an as an order, then we ought to have male and female slaves at our homes" (Evren, 1983: 34). Evren interprets the verses related to covering women's heads in

a different way than the orthodox understanding of Islam. He cannot find any statement which orders women to cover their heads in Ahzab Sura (verse 59) and Nur Sura (verses 30-31). Evren (1988: 212-213) claims that, those who cut Islam into parts, sects and orders, misinterpreted these verses and forced women to cover all of their bodies including their heads and even faces. In addition, there is no rule in Islam according to which woman should stay at home and not work and women should wear a *çarşaf* (women's outdoor overgarnment) (Evren, 1985: 16; 1990a: 482-484; 1990d: 152).

Evren argues that the prohibition of *interest* which is still valid in Islamic countries should be abolished again on the basis of requirements of modern financial life, for this prohibition causes difficulties in transactions on an international scales. Muslim scholars and scientists should come together and find a solution. In fact, circles who defend the continuation of this prohibition do not take notice of extreme profits which should be also forbidden by religion like interest. And they, because of their fanaticism, opposed to *interest* while keeping silent on extremely high profits.

It is possible to suggest that Evren gives assent to Kemalist efforts to reform religion and relate it to science and reason. For example, to Evren there is no difference between "Allahu Ekber" and "Tanrı Uludur" the latter is even better for it is Turkish. Evren does not approve the political elite's appeal to the masses on the issue of religion for electoral concerns. With this line of reasoning, he blames the Democrat Party government, namely Adnan Menderes and Celal Bayar as making concessions to obscurantism by changing the call



to prayer from Turkish to Arabic, with the aim of exploiting religion for political purposes (Evren, 1990b: 89).

(3) Religious Education and Instruction Even though Evren (1981: 17) criticizes Erbakan in his news conference of 16 September 1980 for believing modern, secular education turned students into anarchists, he, together with some politicians of the right, is convinced that the best way to neutralize the politicization in the country is Islamic indoctrination (not practice). That is why as indicated earlier in this chapter, the military regime of 1980-83 included in the Constitution the provision that education and instruction in religion and ethics should be made a compulsory part of the curriculum of all primary and secondary schools. Some argues that the inclusion of these courses to the curriculum is a repudiation of Atatürk's reforms and principle of secularism and this act is a populist inclination of military regime to get public support. (Kahraman, 1989: 110)

Evren, in an answer to the claims that the military regime aims to socialize the youth in an Islamic way through religious courses, legitimizes the compulsory religious education by Atatürk's sentences, pointing to the necessity of religion as an institution: "We do not have clergy, we all are equals and we have to learn the orders of our religion in equality. Every individual need somewhere to learn their religion and faith, that is at school. Religion is a necessary institution and there is no possibility for the survival of the unbelieving nations" (Evren, 1988: 29). To him compulsory religious education, is not essential contrary to secularism, saves religious education from non competent and obscurantist fanatic circles.

These causes are necessary to abolish the monopoly of reactionary circles. In religious education, people will become enlightened by the true knowledge of religion, and by that superstition and misperception of religion will be disappeared.

Evren (1990c: 77; 1987b: 25) also defends his citation of verses from Qur'an and the saying of the Prophet by the same token:

I recite some verses from Qur'an for encouraging my citizens to read the Turkish translations of verses. If citizens read the Turkish translations of verses by themselves, they will be saved from many [mislead] interpretations of fanatic clergy (hodjas). I recite those verses in order to explain my citizens that there is no coercion in religion and no place for sex discrimination, to protect the people who are addicted to drinking, smoking and gambling from these harmful habits, not because of my obscurantism.

The increase in the number of schools to train prayer leaders and preachers (the Imam-Hatip Schools) in another subject that Evren is criticized. Evren argues that these schools do not represent the centers for religious reactionary attitudes but instead they have been established to train enlightened modern religious clergy. He rejects the claim that the number of Imam-Hatip Schools increased sharply during the military government's three year from 250 to 50 (Ahmad, 1193: 219) and only three Imam-Hatip Schools have been allowed to be constructed in his presidency as well. Despite Evren's soft attitude towards Imam-Hatip Schools, he had been also worried the appointment of Imam-Hatip School graduates to the posts of ministry of education and has vetoed Özal's governments' decrees about the appointment of such graduates. As the weekly *Nokta* (March 26, 1989) published the report of the military regime on

religion, these religious schools has been perceived as a unifying factor in Alawii-populated areas such as Tunceli to integrate them through Sunni Islamic education. And again Evren permitted the Rabita organization to pay the salaries of Turkish officials from the Directorate of Religious Affairs sent to Europe so that Turkish Workers would not be influenced by harmful ideologies. It is assumed that if state does not provide religious services and education, those who demand reestablish an Islamic State based on the rules of *Shariah* will fill this vacuum and mislead people's religious beliefs.

(4) Religious Groups and Orders The 1982 Constitution and other post-1980 legislation taken under the military government represent a significant attempt toward de politicization coupled with the state control, legally and institutionally, over the civil society in Turkey. The Constitution rejects a major premise of pluralist democracy, namely the representation of interests through links between political parties and interest groups. It does also not include the principle which was implicit in the 1960 Constitution, that institutions of civil society are autonomous from the state.

Seen in this light, it would not be incorrect to say that Evren does not consider religious communities and orders as legal and legitimate. It is not acceptable to regard these groups as pressure or interest groups of a democratic regime. Still he employs the dichotomy of the "ilerici-gerici" when he addresses to them, namely, to Nurcular, Süleymancılar or Nakshibendis and so on. Contrary to the claim that there was a state support to those groups during military regime, Evren has been committed to fight against them as

obscurantist movements. He, as a president prevented the opening of Bezm-i Alem University which was claimed under the control of fundamentalist circles and even Evren complains about soft treatment of judiciary towards these religious groups. Some Süleymancılar were imprisoned during military regime (Evren, 1990c: 75).

It is interesting to see that Evren does not name these religious communities and orders as Islamic fundamentalists but calls obscurantists, retrogressive. Evren does not legitimize religious groups and orders by referring them as the elements of, for instance, civil society. In that sense, he has not revised the Republican attitude towards orders, still calling them as "gerici" (obscurantist).

Evren expressed fears for the infiltration of religious extremists into the army forces "some religious groups and orders have been indoctrinated by them, up to that time, have been taken to military schools. These students, in ten or fifteen years, will become battalion commander or regiment commander and they may drag the country to the regime by controlling the army" (1990c: 21). In a meeting of the National Security Council (*Milli Güvenlik Konseyi*), he proposes to appropriate the private dormitories in which religious groups "indoctrinates students to permeate into state institutions and the army forces". Note the fact that many cadets have been expelled from military academies for their Islamic activities or religious affiliation. On the subject of recruitment to the military, Evren says that those who graduated from the religiously oriented high schools (Imam-Hatip Schools) could not become army officers. Evren also believes that women students' insistence in refusing to lift

their scarves during school hours is because of their Muslim militancy and supported by foreign fundamentalist organizations. The wearing of head scarves represents a common political action taken by religious reactionaries against the secular regime and a symbol of desire for establishing a *Shariah* state (1987a: 375).

## 2.4 On Özal Governments

The 1982 Constitution in effect, concentrates power in the hands of the President. According to the Article 103, the President is responsible for the safeguarding of the security and the independence of the country, the indivisibility and the integrity of the nation, the unconditional sovereignty of the people, the rule of law, democracy, secular Republic guided by the tenets and reforms of Atatürk and human rights and public welfare. The President is also granted extensive legislative and executive powers. The President may veto legislations passed by the parliament and challenge the legal decree of the cabinet, by appealing to the Constitutional Court.

(4)

This empowerment of the office of Presidency is in conformity with the nature of the state that: "The military envisaged for the third Turkish Republic -a partially transcendental state-" (Heper, 1985: 140). This fact is reinforced by Evren's statement: "We cannot reduce the state to a petty-entity subservient to the law of associations. The office of the state cannot be relegated to that of a master of ceremonies."

Evren, with such a concentration of power in his hands, often intervened in government's affairs and manipulated Özal, Prime Minister, with the exception of economic matters. As seen in the memoirs of Evren, one of the really serious points of conflict between Özal governments and President appears to be on religious issues and the Motherland Party's cultivation of elements of fundamentalist support. Keeping in mind, Evren advised Özal, during Özal's attempts to establish a new political party, not to include persons related to defunct National Action Party (MHP) and the National Salvation Party (MSP).

The President objected and prevented the appointment of higher public servants, of persons associated with former extreme right wing parties or graduated from Imam-Hatip Schools. Evren asked also for alternative names to consider when ratifying appointment of ministers -in some cases, the pressures made by President Evren had been the main reason for the exclusion for Mehmet Keçeciler and Vehbi Dinçerler from Özal's cabinet. They were associated with the Motherland Party's religious faction. President Evren criticizes Vehbi Dinçerler, said to be a member of the Nakshibendi order, for Dinçerler's decision to include Arabic language courses in the curriculum of secondary schools and his suggestions about religious instruction in primary and secondary schools should be converted to applied courses to teach the performance of *Namaz* (daily prayers). Evren also warned Özal about Dinçerler for the appointment of some Imam-Hatip School graduates to the posts of his ministry (1990d: 259-260). The ban of beer advertisements on national radio and television and the long dress of

female students during the National Sports Day of May 1984, Evren considered as concessions to fundamentalists, had been among the other reasons for the exclusion of Dinçerler from Özal's cabinet (1990d: 259-260). Dinçerler's decision to include several publications such as "Yemek Adabı" (rules of good manners for dinner) written by Nakshibendi Sheikh, Mehmet Zahid Kotku was the last drop in the glass that led to his resignation from the cabinet.

Evren did not approve of Özal's government's decisions to built places of worship (*mescid*) within both the Grand National Assembly and various ministries. In addition, Evren vetoed a bill passed by parliament in November 1988 allowing freedom of dress for all students and faculty members in universities. When the government insisted on sending the bill to the president for the second time, Evren applied to the court of Constitution for the annulment of the law about the allowance of the wearing of head scarves (Evren, 1990d: 387).

## NOTES

(1) Article 2 read "Title Republic of Turkey is a democratic, secular and social state governed by the rule of law: bearing in mind the concept of public peace, natural solidarity and justice; respecting human rights; loyal to the nationalism of Atatürk and based on the fundamental tenets set forth in the Preamble.

(2) Evren, in his memoirs, states that "Kubilay was martyred by the religious reactionaries in 1930. This event exerted an intensive influence on me and my friends (1990b: 32).

(3) Cemalettin Kaplan is a leader of an extreme part of religious fundamentalism in Turkey. He lives in West Germany as a political refugee. He has started a campaign against the secular regime in Ankara which he hopes to destroy. He hopes to bring down the Turkish republic by following Khomeini's strategy of infiltrating sound and video cassettes of his sermons into the country, exposing the masses to the ideas of the Islamic state. He intends to wage his struggle against secularism through the mosque rather than a political party which is contradictory to the fundamentals of Islam. Mumcu who interviewed him dismisses Kaplan's ability to carry out an Islamic revolution in Turkey (Mumcu, 1987: 207). He later declared *Anadolu Federe İslam Cumhuriyeti* as an exile-government of Turkey in West Germany.

(4) For further detail on the office of the Presidency in 1982 Constitution, see Heper (1985: 141-148); Özbudun, 1993, *Türk Anayasa Hukuku*, Yetkin Yayınları 3. ed., 1993 Ankara and the



status of the President of the Republic under the Turkish Constitution of 1982: Presidentialism and Parliamentarism in Heper and Evin eds, *State, Democracy and the Military Turkey in 1980s*, 1988, New York: Walter de Gruyter. And see also Parla, *Türkiye'de Anayasalar* 1991, İletişim, İstanbul.

## CHAPTER THREE

### ÖZAL'S CONCEPTUALIZATION OF SECULARISM

#### 3.1. Transition to Civilian Politics

The military leadership which assumed political power in September 1980 identified the political parties, their leaders, even the party system as a major contributor to the domestic crisis, terrorism and eroding public authority which existed prior to intervention. (Turan, 1988: 68) One of the major concern of the military regime was to set up a new basis for the establishment and functioning of civilian politics and political party system. Therefore, the principles which will guide the functioning of parties are indicated both in the Constitution and the Law o the Political Parties. The general provisions directing political parties to abide by the central values of the Republic are summarized in Article 68: " The by-laws and programs of political parties may not be in conflict with the principles of national unity and the territorial integrity of the state, human rights, national sovereignty and the democratic and the secular character of the Republic." Articles 5 and 78, 90 of the Law of the Political Parties define the scope of political parties. Communist parties and parties arrested toward religious distinctions, ethnic separatism and the racial differences are not allowed to exist in the party system ( Turan, 1988: 69) (1).

Shortly after the ban on political activity was repeated, some new parties made their appearance on the Turkish political scene. Only three parties, The Nationalist Democracy Party and the Populist Party which were formed with the encouragement of the military leadership as the main parties of the left and the right and the Motherland Party of Turgut Özal. Özal, a Deputy of Prime Minister during 1980-1982, were allowed to participate in the elections. Despite President Evren's last minute attack on Özal, the Motherland Party won a solid victory in the elections of October 1983, with 211 seats in the parliament.

The Motherland Party featured the four tendencies, conservative, nationalist liberal and social democratic which Özal said, gave his party its philosophical character and it was not the continuation of any of the dissolved parties. Özal (1991a: 305) argues that the Motherland Party took general reconciliation as its starting point, rejecting the dichotomy of left-right inherited from the past and had no relevance to the present. It accepted into its ranks adherents of old movements in order to form a new synthesis. In fact, as Ergüder (1988: 5) argues, in terms of former political associations, Özal was personally occupied a space in Turkish politics somewhere between the moderate and more secular right of the Justice Party vintage and the religious right of the NSP. Özal's Motherland Party provided a broadly acceptable, pro-system alternative, neutralizing and reintegrating the anti-systemic tendencies of the right and the periphery (Ergüder, 1988: 99)

Özal (1984: 160-161; 1988: 9) defines the Motherland Party in his several speeches as a political organization is committed itself

to nationalism, conservatism, social justice and free market economy based on free competition as it is indicated in the party program and in his several speeches.

According to Özal, (1989a: 327) the formation of the MP goes back to the beginning of the reform movements of the Ottoman Empire and draws its strength from the Ottoman reforms, the war of independence, Atatürk reforms and the Democrat Party (2), excluding the status quo periods. Thus, as a continuation of such an innovative movement, the MP has realized the goals of Westernization reforms so that Turkey has no further need of reforms. The economic reforms achieved by the Motherland Party were the last reforms to be needed. Özal (1991a: 311), implied that the Kemalist goal of elevating the people to the level of modern civilization has been accomplished.

As one of the three fundamental principles of the Motherland Party [conservatism-nationalism, liberalism (free market) and social justice], conservatism is not a fanaticism, rather respect for tradition, history and beliefs and protecting the best traditional values that are in conformity with the present conditions of civilization. The foremost concern of such conservatism is of course the strengthening of family which also reveals the reason for the establishment of the ministry of family (Özal, 1989a: 330).

Moreover, Özal (1989a: 750) states that the MP's understanding of social justice is based on national and spiritual qualities which inherited from the past, not derived from the socialists in the West, reminding the saying of the Prophet: "He, who

sleeps while his neighbor is hungry, is not with us" and continues: "the principle of social justice takes place in our beliefs and manner of life" (1985:220).

It is patent that the philosophy of the MP based on religion, in Özal's mind at least, not contrary to religion: "What we (the MP) have done until today is not contrary to our religion, Islam. We have already derived a lot of principles from religion." Islam started to take place alongside science as a source for the MP's some public policies. As Göle (1993: 29) points out that Özal developed "a synthesis between Islamic identity and pragmatic rationality of engineering" through reconciling cultural values with the requisites of economic development. In fact, the Motherland Party with its four tendencies, conservative (religious), nationalist, social democratic and liberal factions, came into existence as an example of such synthesis.

To be noted the fact that the religious group within the Motherland Party influenced the government's decisions in a way that secular circles such as the SDPP (Social Democratic Populist Party) and the media called "creeping Islamicization of the state" (*Briefing*, 29 October, 1990). The religious faction within the Motherland governments introduced some Islamicization policies as in the case of Vehbi Dinçerler's Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports said to be full of the NSP sympathizers (3). As discussed in chapter two, it is clear that Dinçerler made religiously based decisions on the issue of education. The most controversial of his decisions concerned his ban on the teaching of Darwin's theory in primary and secondary schools as a sign of Islamicization of the text books. The long shorts for female students during the National

Sports Day of May 1984, the ban of beer advertisement on national radio and television, inclusion of Arabic courses in the curriculum of secondary schools, his decision to have the textbooks rewritten by a commission which censored modern Turk words and emphasized the leading political and military figures of the early Republican period who were known for their religious opposition to the Kemalist regime and the introduction of Muslim philosophy in the texts were other religiously based policies of Vehbi Dinçerler.

In addition, the SDPP openly accusing the Motherland Party governments, in the late 1980's, of staying silent in view of the fundamentalist infiltration of the Turkish Police Force and the Interior Ministry while other state organizations were also taking a turn towards Islamism. The SDPP parliamentarians charged that the Interior Ministry and the Turkish Police had fallen under the control of Nakshibendi leaders Sheikh Raşit Erol and Sheikh Abdullah and the minister, Aksu was involved in activities to promote a religious state order in Turkey (*Briefing*, 29 October, 1990) (4).

The proposal of the conservative members of parliament from the MP to turn existing Qur'an schools into middle schools within the state system during Avni Akyol's ministry of Education was another attempt and demonstrated the religious commitment of the MP. (*Briefing*, 6 May, 1991)

The MP governments were also criticized for showing a reluctance in the investigation of the assassination of Muammer

Aksoy, Turan Dursun, Çetin Emeç, Bahriye Üçok, said to be murdered by religious fundamentalists.

### 3.2 The Notion of Secularism

Özal (1991a: 311; 1991b: 13; 1993a: 98) considers three fundamental freedoms as sine qua non for Turkey's being a great civilized and civilizing power once again, namely freedom of thought and speech, freedom of religion and freedom of enterprise. These three freedoms have an important place in the ideas of Özal, starting from his formulation of "The Principles of New Outlook in the Development" (*Kalkınmada Yeni Görüşün Esasları*) submitted to Nationalists' Small Congress (*Milliyetçiler Küçük Kurultayı*) in 1979 in Ankara. To Özal, (1989: 387) these three freedoms which are given by God as natural freedoms should not be put under pressure, if they are under pressure, human being cannot develop his qualities and no possibility for the advancement of society. These freedoms will reveal the essence of Turkish people granted by God, in a proper sense and that is the way of development.

Özal (1991b: 15) believes that the freedom of religion is the symbol and the indicator of human love and respect to other human beings in a universal level and sense, keeping in mind the developed countries who have the claim and will of being secular and democratic are the countries that have already embraced his freedom. People who are not in the pressures pertaining to religion and conscience has the will and ability to work hard, to earn much and to live happily with their beliefs. Özal states that the guarantee of the freedom of religion is secularism and adding the fact that

secularism and the freedom of religion are the *raison d'être* and the protector of each other.

Özal as a prime minister, expressed his views on secularism in one meeting of National Security Council:

Secularism has been misinterpreted by some circles. Some people understands secularism as unbelieving or atheism. We define secularism in the following way: no one can interfere with anyone. We do not permit anyone to interfere in the state affairs. We, the Motherland Party, are struggling with the Prosperity Party and the National Action Party which are against the state. (Evren, 1990d: 441)

With his commitment to the principle of secularism, Özal (1991a: 293) interprets Turkish experience with secularism in two different ways. First, he points to a quite unexpected result of the radical secularization, "deification of the state" by attributing to it certain divine characteristics. Özal (1991b: 293) further continues by reminding the secularism (or atheism) of the communist countries: "The cost of replacement of God by state, and religion by ideology, which had been seen as a historic progress of reason against 'superstition', was catastrophic." In fact, Özal has been always critical about the huge role of state in Turkey, beginning with "the New Outlook in the Development" as a technocrat in 1979 to his "Second Transformation Program" as a president in 1992. In the Third İzmir Congress on Economy (June 4, 1992), he described the decade of the 80's as one in which "the mentality placing the state above the individual died away." One part of the Second Transformation Program is the minimization of the state. Özal (1993: 158) proposes a servant state dealing only with matters of security,



law and order, and national defense. Özal's minimal state was to limit itself to engaging in infrastructure services as far as the economy was concerned. Özal also argued for privatization in education which means the abolishment of the Republican practice of unified education (*Tevhid-i Tedrisat*). Looked from this perspective, Özal is in favor of the reduction of state involvement in religious issues, for instance, leaving the Presidency of Religious Affairs (*Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı*) to religious communities. According to him, secularism should be discussed publicly, and without discussion such issues may not be properly understood and practiced. Özal's attitude is evidently open to redefine secularism, and freedom of religion and conscience. Özal (*Zaman*, 20 January, 1992) discusses the nature and definition of secularism in Turkey when he pays particular attention to the critic relationship between religion and politics: "There will be an increase in the number of people who have religious inclination with this new trend towards religion all over the world. This should not be exploited. That would be the most dangerous case. We have to establish the relationship between religion and politics in a correct way."

Özal (*Zaman*, 20 January, 1992) further questions the nature of Turkish secularism as separation of state and religion by making a reference to the Presidency of Religious Affairs: "I am thinking about whether we may change the status of the Presidency of Religious Affairs. We are secular but at the same time, we have a religious organization (within the state) that its president is being appointed by government. Is this correct? Should we leave it to religious communities? How can we do this?"

The second way in which Özal appreciates Turkish secularism is related to the positive effects of secularism on faith. To Özal, what was not foreseen in Turkey was the ultimate affect of limiting the powers of religious institutions in the areas of law and justice would be gradually but steadily to reinforce faith in God. Özal (1991a: 293) continues: " With secularization reforms religion became internalized, concentrated in the souls of the faithful and expressed through prayer. Turks became as pious and devout in their personal lives as they were secular in their public lives. It is a phenomenon that some Westerners see as a return to religion."

Thus, the revival of religion which started in the late 1940s is not a deviation from the principle of secularism. In fact, what is taking place is a more "normalization after a revolutionary secularism." Özal does not share the fear that the threat of religious fundamentalism (*irtica*) is increasing in Turkey. He believes that Turkish people has always been devoted to their religion and traditions and this should not be understood as religious fanaticism or fundamentalism. It is not possible for Turkey to go back: "We do not think that religious fundamentalism may gain strength in Turkey. Turkish people that we have known and received votes, will not allow such a thing. Okay, there are some incidents which are in essence, not in accordance with our religion but it is not possible to generalize such events. These are the acts and actions of small fundamentalist groups which can be encountered in Western societies as well" (Evren, 1990d: 296).

Özal holds that the underlying reason behind the revival of religion in Turkey is the movement towards democracy where the

voice of the people began to make itself heard. Özal (1991a: 295) further argues that the revival of religious feeling may paradoxically signify the growing maturity of Turkish secularism because a return to religion has taken place in a phase in which the "respective realms of religion and reason have been delineated and equilibrium established." What is more significant in Özal's (1991a: 291) stress on the positive affects of the revival of religion is his argument that the return of individuals to the faith ended "the deification of the state." The omnipotent state gave way to the functional state and the citizens regained their individuality and the spirit of enterprise appeared. (1991a: 296) He argues that: "the rebirth of an ardent religious belief within a secular environment re-established in society a just scale of values which assumed its progress in a balanced manner." Interestingly enough, Özal here develops an understanding of religious faith as a liberator force from a divine state: "Religious faith reduces the role of the state while inculcating a sense of freedom and responsibility in the ordinary people, because it does not attribute divine powers to the state" (Özal, 1991a: 297).

Özal (1991a: 297) makes a reference to Ghazali's distinction between faith and reason, in his effort to demonstrate that Turkey has never abandoned secularism, as an early sign of secularism in Muslim history. Özal (1991a: 297) arrives at a conclusion that: "The Turk is aware that faith, in itself, does not affect secularism, nor does it prevent him from being rational, provided that their respective realms are not encroached. In life today there is no difference in this respect between the Christian European and the Muslim Turk." This is a synthesis which has put an end to the

identity crisis of Turk, between the West and Islam (Özal, 1991a: 297).

Given this intellectual context, one may contend that Özal has a different amalgamation of democracy and secularism than strict secularism of the military regime of 1980-1983 and Evren. In his mind, the revival of religion in the forms of the wearing of head scarves, growing role of religious orders in politics, the recruitment of army officers from religious people, the increase in the number of Imam-Hatip schools are the subjects of democratization or of minimization of divine powers of the state not of secularism. In that line of reasoning, it is not strange to see that Özal opened the way to universities for the graduates of Imam-Hatip schools (Gökmen, 1992: 15) and became the prime minister of the government that abrogated the article of 163.

At the same time, Özal government passed a bill from the parliament In November 1988 which allowed freedom of dress for all students and faculty members and later that bill has been abrogated by the Constitutional Court upon application by the President Evren. Özal considers the wearing of head scarves by women students within the framework of freedoms. In this sense to forbid the wearing of head scarves is fanaticism and primitiveness.

Once upon a time, we repelled our daughters, who wear head scarves. That was wrong. Turkey is not and should not be such primitive. I shall articulate in a clear way that this is a matter of respect for decisions of human beings. This is her belief and there should be respect for her beliefs. On the other side, you cannot interfere with others who do not wear head scarves. (Özal, 1993b: 230)

The another subject that considers within the framework of freedoms and democratization is the exclusion of army officers from the military, who were accused of having connections with religious groups and orders. In October 1991, President Özal encouraged these army officers to apply to the European Court of Justice. He also drew an attention to the fact that the decisions of High Council of military are out of civilian judicial supervision and in order to prevent these sufferings there should be amendments in the constitution (*Zaman*, 5 October, 1991).

Özal's democratization program also include permitting the formation of political parties which calls for a *shariah* state: "here may be pro-shariah parties we should be ready for it."( *Türkiye* 15 March, 1993). Özal (*Hürriyet*, 3 March, 1990) differentiates being secular for individuals and for the state, indicating that he is not secular but a pious Muslim, secularism is peculiar to the state.

As related to Turkish experience with secularism, Özal discusses the concept of Westernization and modernization, emphasizing that they are different from each other. In his view, Westernization means resemblance in culture, art, way of life and technology to a western nation, but modernization of a nation's living with its spirit within western technology and science. Japan, at a level of modern civilization, lives as a Japan With its own culture. Özal (1985: 220) continues: "We may benefit from the science and technology of modern civilization while living and thinking as a Turk. This does not cut our ties with our history and culture. Culture is national whereas technology and science is international with an emphasis on the clash of cultures. Although Özal (1986: 282) in his

speeches abroad overemphasizes the great importance that Turkey attaches to universal values of western civilization, he also talks about a gradually "evolving synthesis of two undercurrents," namely western vocation and historic religious values of the people.

Özal interprets the adoption of secularism in Turkey in a critical way. He states that the adoption of secularism following the foundation of the Republic represented a clear break with the Ottoman and Islamic past. Although the void was partially filled by pre-Islamic culture a thousand years old, this pre-Islamic culture was unable to take root. Özal (1991a: 270) argues that the secular reforms, in some aspects, brought "cultural impoverishment." A typical example of this impoverishment is the reform of the Turkish language. Even it was easier to understand the new national language, it had lost much of its capacity to transmit a culture. Özal (1991a: 271) concludes that "the crisis of identity" in Turkey has been exacerbated by the rejection of the historic and traditional component of the culture and its medium, i.e. the language. He actually criticizes the Turkish secular experiment in the following way:

In the absence of a strong and well-defined sense of national identity [because language reform narrowed the bases of it] the westernizing reforms not only failed to achieve political modernization and economic development to the desired extent but, at the same time, by further alienating the traditional elements and the masses from the modernization process, they created a deep-rooted polarization in the society. (1991: 272)

When he compares the modernization experiences of Japan and Turkey, Özal (1991a: 271) states that the cultural vision of the

Republic has been unduly constricted in the modernization process which resulted in a nation-state by reduction, disintegration of the Ottoman Empire.

### 3.3 Religion

Özal is a son of a father who studied religious courses for sixteen years in medrese and served as a clergyman. Despite his father's religious background, Özal learned to pray during his university education. His mother, a modern secular teacher of the Republic, later turned to religion and became a follower of Nakshibendi order. To Özal, Islam as a religion had been very successful from its birth to the 12th century and the Islamic countries had been the advanced ones in the world, reminding the fact that Islam contributed to the Renaissance in the West. It is not right to attribute the beginning of rationalism in Europe to those who fled from Constantinople after Turkish conquest. Islam played the decisive role in this respect (Özal, 1991a : 284). The West have experienced the Industrial Revolution and Muslim world have failed in adopting to it its development. With the industrial revolution, the Western countries had dominated and colonized all Africa and most of the Muslim countries. This exploitation also explains the current richness of the West.

Özal (1991a: 291) does not share the Kemalist perception of religion which regarded religion as the most serious obstacle to the process of modernization and as a conservative and reactionary force which had been responsible for the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Özal believes that, in fact, the decline and the fall of the Ottoman Empire did not really have anything to do with religion. Rather, it

was simply that being part of a whole that was in decline, religious institutions could not avoid declining too. "It was an affect rather than a cause, but the pervasiveness of the religion in society made its decline more apparent." Özal (1993b: 232) believes that the cause of underdevelopment of Islamic countries does not stem from the principles of Islam but from our understanding of religion:

Islam made a huge expansion within 23 years of the Prophet and realized a social transformation as a spread of fire. Islam transformed not only the mentioned country, but also all the societies which Islam made a contact and Islam gave a dynamism to all these societies. That is the power of Islam to transform, to modify but if it is understood in a correct way (Özal, 1993b: 232).

Özal (1993b: 233) talks about three different understandings of Islam, making a reference to an Islamic thinker Abdurrahman Firat. The first is the one in the minds of people, the second is the one in the minds of theological students (*mullah*) and the last is Islam that Qur'an aims to reach. In the people's Islam, to him, there are some traditions, superstition and different perceptions and *mullah's* Islam has been the Sword of Democles above the heads of the intellectual groups. Özal emphasizes that the genuine Islam is the one which Qur'an aims to get.

Özal (1993b: 231) visualizes a model of an ideal society which has been established by the genuine principles of Qur'an. On his opinion, Islam which Qur'an aims to reach is an effort to get a social system that morality and virtue dominating, and the principles of justice and equity are valid, and everything is being conducted for the benefit of the society. Thus, one may say that in Özal's view, the moral values of Islam brings a notion of solidarity. His observance on



the unifying role of Islam is supplemented by the statement made about the totality of Islam: "As far as I read Qur'an, there are several subjects related to life, way of life, individual matters and the society that is why Islam is at the same time a way of life" (Özal, 1993b: 232).

Moreover, Özal (*Zaman*, 6 June, 1992) articulates the idea that Islam brings a notion of equity knowing that everybody is equal in front of God when they worship. He studies the evolution of social groups and sociology of religion and concludes that with the renovation and modernization of religion, it may contribute to the integrity of political and social system. In that respect, one may conclude that religion provides, in Özal's mind, a collective ideology that keeps people together (Ulagay, 1988: 125). Apart from this role of religion, it may also encourage "an organic indigenous development" with a minimum of simple but essential principles and rules (1991a: 296).

Özal (1989: 46) argues that: "The Turkish state is secular but it is, in fact, Islam which holds people together, which serves in our eternal unity in a most strong way. As the Holy Book says 'do not get divided, do not get fragmented, hold onto God's robe in a tight manner'." Özal (1985: 747) keeps emphasizing the importance of religion as a basis of culture within each civilization. Religion influences deeply the individual and the society and even shapes them. In his view, the Turkish society has been affected by some historical developments in which religion has played an important role, making a reference to the Islamic concept of *Tevhid*

(monotheism). Özal (1985: 749) voices his idea on unifying function of *Tevhid* as follows:

The concept of *Tevhid* in Islam has been an effort towards achieving the unity of society. There has been an attempt within this aim, to transform different parts of society into a balanced whole. The best example of this is the Ottoman Empire in which different nations, religions and parts of society lived together, performing their own functions and thus contributing to the balance, development and unity of society.

It is interesting, however, that Özal (1985: 748) relates Islamic concept of order, *Tevhid* in which everything has a place and function to perform in organic relations within the framework of few but essential rules, to a free market. In his opinion, the organic relations means today a market which functions properly with its free forces and main rules. In a market which Islam proposes, there is no direct intervention, instead, indirect incentives which take place. State only within this framework, keeps the rights of administration and distribution. Özal (1985: 748) goes on comparing the Islamic and Western concepts of market in the following way:

There has always been some similarities between Islamic and Western concepts of market. Above all, both of them is free and prices are set by means of market forces. Even competition, in an Islamic market mechanism, is better from the respect of putting some structural obstacles to the emergence of monopolies. Because of the moral considerations, competition in an Islamic market is not so much ruthless as in the Western market.

Stemming from this Islamic intellectual understanding, Özal (1985: 749) talks about his governments innovations inspired from religion, putting a stress on the uniqueness of Islamic finance and

investment which based on profit and loss sharing. Needless to say, Özal's government allowed the interest-free financial corporations. In fact, Özal had been very interested in the relationship between religion and economy from the days of his DPT (State Planning Organization) under secretary. Once, he asked one of planning experts whether religion can be employed as an element of planning (Çölaşan, 1992: 37) (5).

The religious influence upon Özal directed him to form some public policies such as the establishment of the Fund of Social Aid and Solidarity (*Sosyal Yardımlaşma ve Dayanışma Fonu*) derived from the book "Some Advices from Hz. Ali to Statesmen." What is much more significant is his belief that what they, as the Motherland Party governments, had done are not contradictory with the principles of Islam (Özal, 1989: 374) (6). Özal had employed some religious arguments to legitimize his economic decisions. In one of his speeches, Özal (quoted in Ulagay, 1988: 59) recites the words of the Prophet when he tries to refute the criticism about the rise of prices and defends liberalization policies of the government by making a quotation from the Prophet: " 'The control of prices are not under our discretion, that is the act of God. I cannot give any body's right to another one, leave them free.' The Prophet told these words when some people wanted him to set fixed prices on commodities." Özal's utilization of Islam to legitimize free market leads him to conclude that there are some issues in Islam may change over time as for instance economic matters. According to him (1993b: 232), new developments should modify some economic principles of Islam as in the case of interest (*faiz*). Özal differentiates interest and *riba*,

and calls Muslim scholars to make new interpretations about that subject, that is a need for reformation. Özal (1991a: 296) comes to a conclusion that : "The religion is developing. We earnestly hope that it will continue to develop. But we have no need of a reformer, the life of society will take care of its reformation." What is striking to note that Özal employs religious themes or verses from Qur'an, not to fight with religious fundamentalism but to make decisions related to governmental affairs, to develop counter arguments against the opposition.

Although Özal had been criticized for his effort to develop close ties with other Islamic countries, his enthusiasm to maintain the best of relations with these countries should be seen as the continuation of the military government (1980-83) foreign policies. Of course Özal's aim is not only developing economic and commercial relations but also promoting some common political goals especially for the Middle East. In his effort to transform ECO (Economic Cooperation Organization) with the acceptance of the Turkish Republics into a regional economic block, is not contradictory with his commitment to join Turkey to the EC. Turkey is in the unique position of being the only Muslim country to be part of the political economic and security institutions of the western world while being the only NATO member participating fully in the organization of the Islamic countries. Its cultural heritage is mainly rooted in the East but it had always turned toward the West. Özal underlies (1989c: 109) the idea that Turkey is a bridge between East and West through its synthesis of different cultures, not only in geographical, but also in moral and intellectual terms. Thus, the Turkish Republic, with its

pluralistic democracy, secular state and a free market economy is not only a model for the other countries but with all its historic experience is also a moderating factor in the region. Özal further argues that Turkey's membership to the EC, with its stand as a model for other Islamic countries, will make it possible for the EC to establish better relations with the Islamic world. Turkey, today, views herself as an integral part of the West and her membership to the NATO, the Council of Europe and the OECD reflects this alignment.(Özal, 1991c:112)

Özal does not consider the Islamic Republic of Iran as a threat to the secular nature of Turkey and does not accept that Iran lend a support to the extreme religious groups and to those who killed Aksoy, Mumcu, Emeç, and other secular intellectuals. He also says during a speech to the American Enterprise Institute that he did not believe Iran posed a great threat internationally.(Özal, 1989c: 105) Even Özal (Hürriyet 4 Feb, 1993) says during a speech to the Brookings Institute in Washington, the claim that Iran supports radical elements is an invention of the MIT (Turkish Intelligence Organization)

According to Özal (1985: 748), Islam makes a great contribution, during its emergence, to the development of individualism which is an essential element of Özal's system of thought. Özal's understanding of religion as one of the bases for his liberalism, i.e. emphasis on individualism and minimization of state, keeping in mind the free fundamental freedoms, seems to be parallel with the "civil religion" of American liberalism, it is almost needless to mention the influence of the American system upon Özal (7).

The liberal civil religion in the U.S., according to Garry (1992: 129), emphasizes social responsibilities to promote freedom, peace and justice and speaks more of human rights and of what will benefit humanity. It harmonizes religious values with democratic political values that recognize and tolerate the diversity of the religious sects and moral teachings. The concept of civil religion refers to the political recognition of the influence and tradition of religion in America's public life. Liberal use of religion aims at inspiring the ideals of justice and fairness and at providing people with a sense of comfort and a sense of communal identification, while the conservative religious tendency fuels a passionate resentment toward change and modernity. Liberals, unlike conservatives who command that a particular set of private moral beliefs be imposed upon the public through the political process, form political beliefs by asking what religious values apply to the political world. In addition to religious and civic values and the ideals of freedom and democracy, American liberalism recognizes and encourages community values (supportive and cooperative community) alongside individualism (Garry, 1992: 130).

Özal's belief in individual and his emphasis on the three fundamental freedoms and democracy lies well within the liberal understanding. His belief in change and in optimism for the future also reflects a liberal commitment to build the future. Conservatism as one element of Özal's formulation (conservatism-nationalism and social justice) may be seen as an effort to promote community values i.e. the unity, cooperation alongside his individualism. Özal values change with the belief in the freedom and the power of the individual,

gathering his ideas under the titles of "New Outlook" in 1979 and "The Second Transformation Program" in 1992; one may thus conclude that in spite of his emphasis and encouragement for some conservative values and institutions such as family, respect for people, social order, Özal seems to be liberal rather than conservative. Moreover his utilization of religious values as political values of Turkish public life through some selective public policies as in the cases of education, social aid and economic issues, reflects the main characteristics of the American liberal concept of civil religion. Unlike conservatives, Özal's commitment to change and his selective application of the religious values to the Turkish political world constitute other examples of his liberal conceptualization of civil religion. Özal's consideration of reformation in religion may be understood within his liberal civil religion concept: "The life of society [social change] will take care of the reformation of religion." Similarly, Özal tolerates religious orders and communities and is in favor of giving legal status to the religious communities as an element of the civil society. (Özdemir, 1993: 20) His attitude towards religious orders is the best example of his liberal approach.

### 3.3.1 Religious Orders

Özal was criticized by some circles, ranging from Evren to intellectuals and journalists on the basis that he made concessions to fundamentalist groups and created suitable grounds for strengthening religious communities and orders. According to memoirs of Evren, prime minister Özal in his first days of government, requested changing the status of the Presidency of the

Religious Affairs and putting an end to the imprisonment of Raşid Erol, one of the sheikhs of Nakshibendi order. Regarding Özal's ties to religious communities during his life and his visits to the tombs and convents (*dergah*) which had a legitimizing effect on the existence and the role of religious orders, one may say that Özal is in favor of enforcing the role of religious orders (folk Islam) politically and socially. In fact, Özal's life had been connected to the religious groups since his university education. He kissed the hands of Mehmet Zahid Kotku, one of the sheikhs of the Nakshibendi order, for several times to show his respect. Özal's mother, Hafize Özal was buried beside Kotku upon the decision of the Council of the Ministers.

What is more striking that Özal regards sufism (*tasavvuf*) as a basis for the creation of the universalism, humanism and tolerance in Turkish society. The concept of the brotherhood of the mankind, a product of the Turkish sufism is perceived by Özal as the ground in which tolerance and a new synthesis may flourish in Turkish society. Making an illuminating statement about the formation of the Motherland Party: " I have established the Motherland Party according to the philosophy of Mevlana." One may think that, in Özal's mind Turkish sufism represented by Mevlana and Yunus Emre, may provide suitable grounds for secularized Islam and freedom of conscience and religion by making a quotation from Atatürk: " I had opened the tomb of Mevlana [after one year from the closing of all tombs and convents] as a museum (*Asari Atika Museum*) because I believe that whoever visits Mevlana will be saved from religious reactionism and will be on the side of the revolution



[Turkish Revolution] and of freedom of religion and conscience" (Özal, 1989b: 4). Özal seems to be engaged in supporting religious orders and communities in Central Asia and in the Balkans to keep and promote Turkish Republic's interests through these orders activities (*Zaman*, 22 April, 1993). Özal's support to the religious orders, it may be argued, has some parallels to Abdulhamit II's utilization of religious orders for state interests.

In addition, in Özal's view, contrary to the claims made by media, the murders of Aksoy, Mumcu and others have nothing to do with religious circles by stating that: "I do not believe that Turkey's extreme religious circles had opted for armed attacks. It looks more like a provocation, there is the involvement of the professional men" (*Briefing*, 12 February, 1990).

## NOTES

(1) On the subject of legal structuring, 1982 Constitution on the political parties, law, see Turan, "Political Parties and the Party System in post-1983 Turkey", in Heper and Evin (eds), *State, Democracy and the Military Turkey in the 1980s*, New York and Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1988 p. 68-75 and William Hale, *Transition to Civilian in Turkey: the Military perspective*, 1988 p. 159-175.

(2) It should be added that Özal regards the Democrat Party as the real "People's Party" putting a stress on the achievements of the Democrats in the 1950s, in developmental affairs (Özal, 1989a: 327).

(3) Vehbi Dinçerler's efforts to islamicize education is in conformity with Özal's views on the subject. Özal pays attention to the importance of Islamic training in national education (*İslami Terbiye*) (1993a: 16)

(4) Even the SDPP, in its motion to investigate fundamentalism and their relationship with the government, claimed that infiltration of the Interior Ministry by religious personal aimed at establishing a special armed force of some 110.000 people.

(5) Çölaşan claims that Özal held meetings with some experts in his room when he was an undersecretary of DPT, talked about the Prophet and Hz. Ali, read some verses from Qur'an and Hadiths as well.

(6) His religious considerations in making decision related to governmental affairs is evidently clear in his disturbance from

Korkut Özal's statement that KDV (value added taxes) is not Islamic (*Milliyet*, 27 June, 1994).

(7) Özal, in one of his visitings to the United States, says that "I have done in Turkey what I have seen in the United States."

(8) Özal also wanted himself to be buried besides Mehmed Zahid Kotku in his testament before his by-pass heart operation in February 1987, but he changed his testament to the place where he was buried in April 1993 in the opposite side of the Monument of Menderes. (*Milliyet*, 5 July 1994).

## CHAPTER FOUR

### CONCLUSION

Secularization has been essentially a cumulative process in Turkey. In the Ottoman Empire, even when Islamic influences reached their apogee during the sixteenth century, the state was far from being a truly Islamic one. As Heper (1981: 348) points out, "institutional secularization as differentiation" i. e. giving religion a definite, though by no means a minor place in the social scene also existed in the Ottoman polity. Ottoman reformists (*küttab*, bureaucrats) introduced secularization policies through the *adab institution* which is the secular principle of the Ottoman state. It was as early as the nineteenth century that the idea that life can be lived in accordance with rationality rather than religious rules, began to take shape. And later the Young Turks, drawing upon Gökalp's ideas, developed a conception of nationalism that brought with it a secular image of government and introduced some reforms which constituted preliminary steps for the Kemalist secularism. Ottoman secularism was in the direction of bifurcation of religion and state, not separation of religion and state. The Kemalist reformers considered this dualistic structure of the Ottoman times as unworkable and preferred the way of modernizing the country without making use of religion. For Kemalists Islam was not supposed to have even the

function of a "civil religion" for the Turkish polity. Islam was not going to provide a transcendent goal for the political life (Heper, 1981: 350).

The secularization process in its various dimensions started during the Ottoman era and gained further momentum under the Republic. Donald Smith (quoted in Turan, 1991: 33) has identified five types of secularization process which can be experienced. Four of these had been taking place during last two centuries of the Ottoman Empire. These are :

(1) polity separation secularization, meaning the institutional separation of religion and polity and the denial of the religious identity; (2) polity expansion secularization, meaning the expansion of the political system into areas of society formerly regulated by religion; (3) political culture secularization, meaning the transformation of values associated with the polity and replacing of religious by secular notions of politics, political community and political legitimacy; (4) political process secularization, meaning the decline in the political saliency of religious leaders, interest groups and issues. The fifth polity dominance secularization, that is the initiation of an open governmental attack on the religious basis of general culture, constitutes the essence of Kemalist reforms (Turan, 1991: 33). During the 1930s, the Kemalists tried to nationalize Islam as a part of the imposition of secular ideology and at the same time controlled it through creating a religious organization within the state as a minor bureaucracy.

Transition to multiparty politics inevitably brought about a moderation in the understanding of secularism in Turkey. The confines of religious freedom were expanded and Islam was this time politicized. Religious liberalization, as a natural consequence of democratic politics were introduced by the Republicans and further its scope broadened provided that state institutions were not affected. As a related development to the moderation of secularism, Turkish polity has witnessed a revival of religion as a political input. Religious groups have started to influence the governmental affairs in order to attain the benefits of their political mobilization by the Democrats. Clientelistic relations between the Islamic circles and the Democrats resulted in the emergence of a conservative-religious axis which later gave a birth to a religious party, the NSP. Islam no longer was a solely a matter of individual concern, it was a political factor that should have a considerable influence on the political arena, performing a function of checks and balance (*denetim*). One of the factors leading to the 1960 Intervention was the utilization of religion by the Democrats for electoral considerations. The makers of the 1961 Constitution adopted an understanding of more rights with more sanctions against their misuse or abuse. The emergence of the NSP, a religious party indicated a further legitimating of the role of religion in politics. The NSP's rejection of the identification of modernization with Westernization and its search for a new (Islamic) model of modernity represented an emergence of new elites with Islamic background. When the military as the sole guardian of the Republic came to power in 1980 with the aim of reestablishing democracy and the strengthening the state, religion was considered as contributing to solidarity and national unity. The military's

attitude towards religion was pragmatic to the extent that it did not hesitate to employ religion as a source of ethics and culture and an antidote to the leftist ideologies. The military regime's utilization of religion for the politicization of society has been accompanied with an emergence of "a Durkheimian version of religiosity" (Heper, 1981: 359) (1). Such religiosity has been reinforced by liberal and pluralist policies of the motherland party which combined four tendencies namely conservatives, liberals and nationalists, reflecting a new evolving synthesis on Özal's personality.

As a parallel development to the changing nature of secularism, the role of religion in Turkey's political development has also changed significantly since the Ottoman times. Toprak's study of Islam and Political Development (1981: 123-124) demonstrates the varying functions of the religion. In the Ottoman period Islam defined individual identity and political legitimacy, and functioned as a mechanism of social control. During the next phase of Turkey's political development, namely its transition from an empire into a nation-state, Islam provided a source of national unity against invading powers. After the establishment of the Republic in 1923, religion became a means of protest against the authoritarian one party regime. In the transition from one party rule to democracy, Islam served as a means of mass political mobilization in the hands of a newly established opposition party which sought to gain a foothold in electoral politics through politicizing the religious dimension of the long-standing elite-mass gap. During the 1960s and 1970s religion assumed a less central role in political polarization as the left-right cleavage became a major source of conflict in Turkey's

society. (Toprak, 1981: 124) Finally, one may suggest in the 1980s and 1990s with the decline of ideologies, religion has again assumed a more central role in democratization process (head scarves, turban movement and the growing influence of a pro-Islamic party, Welfare Party) and political polarization, creating a secular-non secular cleavage.

The changing role of religion in 1980s took place within a region in which Islamic resurgence appear as an ideology with the Islamic revolution of Iran. Regarding this growing visibility of Muslim revival, it is not necessary to reiterate that Islam has assumed influential roles in national policies, actually Evren and Özal's utilization of religion for some political and even secular policies, as discussed in Chapter II and III is a strong evidence for this observation.

Up to that point, I have tried to summarize the story of Turkish experience with secularism and its changing nature in order to get a historical perspective when I compare and contrast the positions of Evren and Özal on the subject of secularism. In the following pages, I discuss their understandings of secularism under three subheadings: the notion of secularism, religion and its reformation and religious groups.

Before starting to find similarities and dissimilarities between Evren and Özal's views on secularism, it should be noted that Ziya Gökalp's system of thought has a significant impact on their interpretation of religion and its role in Turkish society. As Parla (1985: 7) perceptively observed, Gökalp's corporatist thinking (2) has



provided the paradigmatic world view for the several dominant political ideologies in Turkey and that more specifically Unionism (1908-1918) and Kemalism (1923-1950) as singular official ideologies, as well as contemporary Kemalisms (1960-1980) are but programmatic and, in the narrow sense, ideological variations of Gökalp's inclusive system. He further contends that the Kemalism of the armed forces is a variant of Gökalp's corporatism. The ideological positions of the right-wing parties, DP-AP-ANAP, have also been influenced from Gökalp's corporatism via Kemalism.

For Gökalp, corporatism as the solidaristic perception of society serves a philosophical model of society, and the ideology is social solidarism (*içtimai mefkurecilik*). The Kemalist principle of populism was heavily influenced by Gökalp's social solidarism. The Kemalists saw themselves as the leaders of the people in a society without a developed class structure. To them "people" implied the coalescing of the various social forces against the old order. The principle task was therefore not merely to destroy the old society but to collaborate in the creation of a new one. Both tasks require total cohesion and unity among all the groups who made up the people and there was no room for a conflict of interest among them. Even one may link the Kemalist solidaristic perception of society which coalesced without any privileges and classes, to the ideological nature of Islam in which *Umma* is considered a coalescent unity and everybody is equal in front of God. (Mardin, 1992b: 101) In that respect, the republic provided the continuation of *Umma* structure. Patriotism, sense of unity and cooperation which given in the schools are not far from the old notion of *Umma*. The comparisons and

contrasts below are therefore taken within the context of Atatürk's ideas on the subject and Gökalp's corporatist understanding of religion.

#### 4.1 The notion of Secularism

The distinction between Turkish political elite and state elite would be a key to explain the major differences between Evren and Özal's conceptualization of secularism. As Heper (1987: 53) states, the state elites are always suspicious of the political elites, in the eyes of the former, if left to their own devices, the latter would destabilize the system because they are pre-occupied with particularistic interests. The political elites tend to have a protest orientation toward the state elites. So the political elites often try to challenge the system. The confrontation between state and political elites responded to the degeneration of the political system in three times (the 1960, 1971 and 1980 interventions).

What is more crucial to use here is the differing conceptions of democracy exposed by state and political elites. The state elites traditionally comprising military officers, senior government officers, long tended to conceive of democracy vertically, seeing it as a matter of political responsibility whereas the political elites saw themselves as the people's representatives and placed heavy emphasis on the horizontal character of democracy as political participation (Heper, 1992: 106) (3). Looked at from this particular perspective, Evren as a leader of military intervention of 1980 and later President (as a member of state elites), considers secularism as the guarantee of democratic regime against the possible social and political

movements. But Özal regards secularism as the guarantee of freedoms and liberalization policies toward religious groups, which are the natural results of democracy and political responsiveness of political elite.

For Evren, like the Kemalist reformers, secularism is strongly connected to the ideal of modernization and the aim of reaching at the level of Western civilization. Secularism constitutes a modern way to be developed and civilized. Secularism is not only a guarantee of the religious freedom and conscience but also it protects Turkish national unity and democratic regime from the religious reactionary movements. But Özal put an emphasis on the freedom side of secularism and on the protection of the rights of pious Muslims as in the case of veiled women students.

Moreover, Özal makes a distinction between Westernization and modernization. In his view, Westernization means resemblance in culture, art, way of life and technology to a Western notion, but modernization is with the example of Japan, a nation's living with its spirit. Özal seems to have borrowed his distinction of culture which is national whereas technology and science (civilization) is international, from Gökalp's formulation (Turkish Culture and Western Civilizations). Gökalp (1968b: 22-39) argues that just as cultural differences do not prevent the sharing of a religion, so a difference of culture and religion does not prevent the sharing of civilization. Culture is national whereas civilization is international. For Gökalp, there is no inherent contradiction between culture and civilization or between nationalism (Turkism), religious community (Islam) and international community (modernism-Westernism). They

are in no way incompatible as ideals worth preserving, provided that their function, place and level in national life are not confused.

In Özal's liberal policies toward religion and religious groups, his emphasis on the concept of servant state, and on the reduction of state involvement in religious issues are the outcomes of political elite attitude. Even Özal further criticizes radical secularization of the Republic leading to deification of state by attributing to its divine characteristics and underlies the religious revivalism as a liberating force, putting an end to the deification of state. In that respect, Özal, both as a Prime Minister and President, tries to change the rule of the game and challenge Kemalist understanding of secularism.

Although both Evren and Özal seem committed to the principle of Kemalist secularism, to be noted the fact that Özal's interpretation of secularism is open to redefining secularism and reestablishing the relationship between state and religion. Unlike Kemalist secularism and Evren's interpretation, Özal argues to leave religious matters and the administration of the Presidency of Religious Affairs to the religious communities. Such interpretation of secularism is a radical departure from the Kemalist secularism. Stemming from the fact that there is no distinction between religion and state in Islam, according to the Kemalist reformers, in Turkish context, secularism means putting an end to the domination of religious authority over all areas of life, except spiritual matters and making religion subservient to the state. Thus they never think of an independent religious organization like a Western church which is presided by a spiritual authority.

Özal's interpretation of secularism appears to be in parallel with Gökalp who tries to give religion a position of a separate, moral and cultural institution. Such a religious organization which resembled in structure to Roman Catholic Church, did not, however, in any way intersect with the secular political institutions of the nation. Such an "ethical corporation" represented solely a spiritual authority. He envisions a religious organization on the national scale ranging from local mosques headed by *imams* to large mosques headed by *müftüs*, to a national office of *head-müftü* as the highest religious authority. Gökalp (1968b: 125) suggests that the *head müftüs* of all islamic nations would select a caliph as the head of the entire Islamic community of nations. Such a religious organization is a clear institutional separation of religion and state. Moreover, Gökalp asserts that ,in accordance with the pluralism of his solidaristic corporatism [is coined by Parla (1985: 39)], political and religious authorities as distinct social units would be mutually autonomous. Such a conception led Gökalp to recommend the elimination of the office of the *Sheyhulislam* (the supreme *Muftî*) from the structure of the secularized state. It means for the contemporary Turkey a separation of religious organization (the Presidency of Religious Affairs) from the structure of the secular state. Similarly Özal is in favor of separating the religious organization from the state structure but Evren, one may argue that, would consider such a separation as a dangerous development and a violation of the Kemalist understanding of secularism.

On the subject of the Kemalist reforms, Evren as a state elite embraces and defends Kemalist reforms by putting a blame on the

political elite as in the case of the changing of the call to prayer while Özal is critical about, at least, some secular reforms taken under the principle of secularism. For instance, he argues that the adoption of secularism represented a clear break with the Islamic past and (further) some secular reforms brought "cultural impoverishment" such as the language reform. Thus "the crisis of identity" has been exacerbated by the rejection of the historic component of culture, namely the language. In short, one may claim that Evren has the vision of protecting the Turkish Republic and understands secularism within this framework (a military perception as a state elite) whereas Özal, as a political elite, has a vision of transforming the system and making even some radical reforms (second transformation program) through liberalization policies that will end the deification of state.

Naturally, Evren and Özal's different interpretations of secularism come from their interpretation of Islam and its place in the society.

#### 4.2 Religion and its Reformation

Religion and politics are a closely integrated unity in Islam and not two separate spheres of life. Islamic theology encourages an involvement in political activities as a religious duty. Therefore, each member of the Islamic community is both a religious and a political man. Islam, from the very beginning has been a political religion which has both united and governed the community of believers and a legalistic religion which has laid down a series of legal rules. The unity of divine and worldly realms in Islam implies a unity of religion

and politics; that is why, in Islamic societies the impact of religion on social and political life is extensive since the boundaries between the religious sphere and the socio-political sphere are either non-existent or weak. Stemming from this peculiar nature of Islam, each conceptualization of secularism determines different roles for religion in Turkish socio-political life.

Both Evren and Özal consider religion as a source of moral values and an instrument of solidarity, unity and coherence to get a peacefully ordered and stable society. Such acceptance of religion which draws an attention to its solidarity function is an inheritance derived from Gökalp's solidarism. Gökalp (1972: 34) argues that religion provides a type of morality and social solidarity. This solidarity function of religion, of course, is very practical for the purposes of the September 12th regime under Evren to reestablish democracy in a deliberately depoliticised society. We may conclude that unlike Kemalist secularism of the RPP (1923-1950), for Evren and Özal, Islam is supposed to have the function of a "civil religion" for the Turkish polity. Both Özal and Evren liked to narrate verses from Qur'an as a point of reference in an attempt to justify their secular policies and to exploit an integrative function of Islam.

But it should be added that Özal's scope for the conceptualization of civil religion, liberal concept of civil religion is much more broader than Evren's one. Özal harmonizes religious values with democratic political values in an attempt to reach at a new synthesis for Turkish society. Özal's liberal concept of civil religion aims to save the individual from the divine characteristics of

the state if "Mustafa Kemal's secularism tried to free the individual from the society" (Mardin, 1992a : 71).

It would be correct to say that their use of Islam to get social harmonization and solidarity within Turkish society contradicts with Kemalist interpretation of secularism. In fact, it is impossible to think that Mustafa Kemal approves the use of religion as an instrument. On the contrary, the main theme on Kemalist political agenda was the replacement of religion by science to perform the social functions of religion. Mustafa Kemal's attempt to settle natural laws as the basic philosophy of the Turkish Republic is a strong evidence that he perceives science as a "civil religion" (uygar din) (Mardin, 1990: 199).

Evren and Özal differentiate true Islam which is necessary to construct a just and equal society and Islamic fundamentalism. Both seemed to agree that the underdevelopment of the Islamic countries does not stem from the very principles of Islam but of misinterpretation of it. Both seem also to believe that Islam and modernity do not necessarily contradict, do necessarily not oppose one another. This assumption is followed by an effort of going back to the original texts, namely to Qur'an and the tradition of Prophet in order to have a purified, but at the same time rationalized Islam. The notion that Islam and modernity are not contradictory but complementary of each other lies within the intellectual framework of the Ottoman times. The two prominent movements of the Ottoman, i. e. that of late Turkism and of Islamism put forth similar arguments though differing their emphasis on the role of religion. For instance Gökalp also argues that Islam is not contrary to modern state but,



on the contrary, the Islamic state means a modern state (Gökalp, 1968a: 222) (3).

In order to attain a purified and rationalized Islam, Evren points up the urgent need for reformation of religion. Although Özal accepts such a need for reformation in religion, he takes that in the sense of renovation (*içtihad*). On the other hand, Evren's view on reformation goes even further, defending the change of the call to prayer from Arabic to Turkish. This understanding of reformation is similar to Atatürk's attempt to make a rational and national (Western-like) religion as it is seen in the case of the "turkification" of Qur'an and the call to prayer (4).

Similarly, Gökalp (1968b: 120) claims that in order to give a greater rapture and exhilliation to our religious life, it is necessary that Qur'an and the religious services be read in Turkish referring to the ideas of Imam-i Azam, the founder of *Hanefi* law school. In fact, the forerunner of reformation in religion is Gökalp as it is clear in one of his (1976: 11; Lewis, 1961: 415) poems:

A land where the call to prayer from the mosque  
is recited in Turkish

where the peasant understands the meaning of  
the prayer in his worship,

A land where in the schools The Qur'an is read in  
Turkish,

Where, big and little, everyone knows the  
command of God,

This, O son of the Turks, is your fatherland.

The idea of reformation and rationalization of religion is included Gökalp's system of thought. Gökalp regards Islam as a historical phenomenon subject to change and dependent on the

social circumstances in which it is developed. He also seeks a rational explanation for the religious rules and ceremonies.

While Evren proposes his ideas on the reformation of religion to undermine the influence of religious fundamentalist arguments directed to the nature of the regime and to justify secular policies of the Republic, Özal presents the renovation and modernization of religion to promote an organic indigenous development. According to Özal, a modernized Islam would be a drive-force of social transformation and economic development. Özal's approach is a bit parallel to the reformist Muslim thinkers such as Mohammed Abduh and İkbāl and sometimes his perplexed mind on the idea of renovation reflects intellectual considerations of an Islamist individual in the modern world.

#### 4.3 Religious Orders

In the Ottoman Empire, popular religion which was institutionalized in the form of religious orders had rendered the services of colonizing and settling many parts of the empire. But at the same time, they are commonly identified as centers of opposition to the orthodox religion of the state and the *ulema*. At the end of the nineteenth century religious orders were used by Sultan Abdulhamit II as communicative channels to reach masses, to promote Pan-Islamist view among his Muslim subjects. Although religious orders had rallied to the support of the War of Independence, the Kemalist reformists abolished the religious orders in 1925. The orders were considered as the centers that the most dangerous resistance to secularism would come. In 1925, a rebellion led by a Nakshibendi

sheikh surfaced in Eastern Anatolia and again in the Menemen incident of 1930, a shadowy Nakshibendi figure called muslims to rally round the green flag and destroy the impious republican regime. In spite of their abolishment, the religious orders had never died but had gone underground. With the liberalization of religious policies in the late 1940s, religious orders reappeared and showed increased activity after the 1950s.

Religious orders have been involved in politics in a way that they have supported the right -wing parties in exchange for some religious policies such as turning the call to prayer into Arabic. Today, the Nakshibendi order dominates both the grassroots and the national leadership of the Welfare Party, as it did in the case of the National Salvation Party. Mehmed Zahid Kotku, a Nakshibendi sheikh, gathered a circle of persons around him who later, in the 1970s and 1980s, played a key role in politics. Among them we may mention Necmettin Erbakan, Korkut Özal and Turgut Özal. The role of religious orders in politics has been a very controversial issue in the secular republic of Turkey.

The most striking difference between Evren and Özal's interpretation of secularism is evidently seen in their attitude towards religious communities and orders. Although Evren modifies the previous strict stand on secularism, his interpretation of secularism does not include the right of establishing a religious organization and involvement in politics, considering them obscurantist and illegitimate. On the one hand he employs religion as an instrument of solidarity and national unity, on the other, he shares, under the influence of Iranian revolution, the fear of the

Kemalist reformers that Islam, in a Muslim country, may constitute a counterrevolutionary ideology to destroy the regime. But Özal does not conceive religious communities and orders as reactionary and illegitimate but integral elements of a civil society, and when he attacks on Islamic fundamentalism, unlike Evren, he does not address to religious orders, Suleymancies, Nurcus and so on. Özal, further, is in favor of strengthening the religious orders and communities to realize the Turkish state's interests in Central Asia, as a foreign policy element similar to Abdulhamit II's strategy. Moreover, Evren equates religious communities with religious obscurantism which is responsible for the backwardness of the Ottoman Empire. Under the influence of republican dichotomy "ilerici" and "gerici", he considers religious fundamentalism much more dangerous than communism. It is interesting to note that Gökalp (1968b: 61) also underlies the similar idea that theocratic and clerical movements are the principal reason why Muslim societies remain backward and even gradually retrogress. While Turkish nationalism is a cultural-normative system for Gökalp, Islamic religion is an ethical-normative system, both of supplying the basis of solidarity in the society. Gökalp is interested in the social function of Islam, not its theology. Gökalp put a stress on Sufism as a prop for solidarism. The principle of the communion of the self with a transcendental God in Sufism easily fitted into the primacy of society over the individual in the solidaristic corporatist model. For Özal, Turkish Sufism serves for the creation of universalism, tolerance and solidarity for Turkish society. In Özal's view, religious orders does not only provide a source of moral values but also they

do play a crucial role in an attempt to reach at a new synthesis for Turkish society.

In sum, it would be correct to say that the 1980s and early 1990s have witnessed a significant change in the relationships between state and religion under Evren and Özal. The changing role of religion as a result of particular change in the state elites' attitude towards Islam, have been modifying the nature of Turkish secularism in a way that represents a departure from the pre-1980 Kemalist secularism. Such a difference has been accompanied with a liberal and pluralist conceptualization of secularism by the political elites. Seen in this light, although secularism is still an issue of conflict in Turkish polity, creating secular-non secular cleavage, one may suggest that, the Turkish secularism will continue to be redefined provided that the system keeps its commitment to democracy and civilian government. The growing political saliency of a religious party, the Welfare Party seems to be a challenging phenomenon on the issue of the relations between religion and state. The question now to ask is whether the relatively pluralist and liberal nature of Turkish system, the legacy of 1980s and early 1990s will evolve into a more liberal and democratic structure or not. Above all, it may be suggested that in the 1990s, the issue of secularism will continue to keep its importance and controversial nature.

## NOTES

(1) As Heper (1981: 350) points out, in this version, religion refers to a class of statements and actions denoting social relationships. As a result of the superior powers of the collectivity, its cohesive force and moral authority, group-ritual aspects become important.

(2) Corporatism is a system of thought and a set of institutions that presuppose a predominantly capitalist mode of production with its central elements of the primacy of the private property and enterprise. Corporatism is, by definition, anti-socialist and anti-Marxist. It is also anti-liberal (in philosophy, politics and economics), but not anti-capitalist. For Gökalp, corporatism as the solidaristic perception of society as an analytic discipline also served as a philosophical model of society. The system as a whole took the shape idealistic positivism: the method was scientific in the positivistic sense and the ideology was solidarism. Gökalp labeled it social solidarism (*İçtimai Mefkurecilik*). (Parla, 1985 : 26)

(3) Gökalp considers Protestantism as more or less Islamicized form of Christianity and the modern state came into existence in Europe first in the Protestant countries. (Gökalp, 1968b: 222)

(4) It is true that state elites in the 1980 changed their attitude towards religion and softened Kemalist understanding of secularism, regarding Kemalism not as a political manifesto but as a technique. (Heper, 1985: 143) But the differing conceptualization of democracy and secularism by Turkish state and political elites is still persisting and striking in the case of religious groups- i.e. on the recruitment of army officers, veiled female students and so on.

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